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NEW YORK Saturday Star Journal A POPULAR PAPER FOR PLEASURE & PROFIT

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Vol. III.

E. F. Beadle,
William Adams,
David Adams,
PUBLISHERS.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 1, 1873.

TERMS IN ADVANCE: One copy, four months, \$1.00
One copy, one year, \$3.00.
Two copies, one year, \$5.00.

No. 151.



With a quick gasp Florry bent to her oars. The little boat swung about; a long pull and a strong pull sent it skimming away on its backward course.

A BOAT SONG.

BY HAZ HAZARD.

Gayly we glide
Over the tide,
Chasing the billows blue;
White is our sail,
Foam-flecked the trail
Left by our light canoe.
Luna's bright ray
Falls on the bay,
Tracing a path of gold
Far to the land,
Where, on the strand,
High are the billows rolled.
Fast the waves come,
Crested with foam,
Over the moonlit sea;
Lightly the spray
Dashes away,
Spurred by our prow to lea.
Blithely our song
Sounded a note,
Flocks on the breeze, I trow,
Set to the time—
"Tuned to the chime
Rang on our wave-beat row."
Strike the guitar,
Sound it clear,
Strike! strike its chords again!
Till the far steep,
Throned on the deep,
Echoes the glad refrain.

The False Widow: OR, FLORIEN REDESDALE'S FORTUNE.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,
AUTHOR OF "ADRIA, THE ADOPTED," "CECIL'S
DECEIT," "STRANGELY WED," "MADAME
DURAND'S PROTECTOR," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

UNDER THE MOON.

"You precious darling! Do you mean to say that you've spent half your life in this poky place, among snuffy professors and dull governesses, under the eye of that griffin of a preceptress, and never played hooky—never had some nice young man make love to you on the sly under their very noses? Have you really been a pattern of propriety fit to grace society with your staid sobriety? Isola, how incredible!" Florien Redesdale faced her pretty roommate at Madame Molyneux's Young Ladies' Academy, with an expression of mock incredulity and deprecation. One might search long and far before finding such a sweet and winsome creature as this fair little being whom impetuous Florry had loved at sight. She had a slender, rounded figure, a face where the whiteness of the lily blended with the blush of the rose, glittering golden hair which hung in loving tendrils about the wide fair brow, a snowy throat and a dimpled hand, and great, innocent, clear blue eyes unshadowed and trusting as those of a pretty, happy-tongued babe. Poor little friendless Isola Snow, who had been in a measure bequeathed to the institution eight years before, had always found the tenderest spots in the weary, burdened hearts of those snuffy professors, dull, gray governesses, and was no less a favorite—though an unacknowledged one—with

the grim and griffin-like Preceptress herself. She opened her blue eyes now wide with innocent surprise.

"Of course I never broke the rules," she answered. "It's not so wonderful, Florry, since I scarcely know any one outside the school. There's Miss Vincent, the drawing-teacher who gives lessons in the juvenile department, she lives in the snugest tiny white house you ever saw, a little way down the river; and Madame Molyneux lets me visit her in the holidays. I have one afternoon in a quarter to spend with the minister's wife, and that's all I'm ever outside the gates, except to church or on our general excursions. You see how little temptation I have to hoodwink madame if I were even so inclined."

"Oh, you little innocent! As though opportunities wouldn't come with the seeking. It's a wilful waste of youth's bright hours, I declare it is, for you to be mewed up all ways in this school prison. How you've existed so for eight whole years is more than I can comprehend. I'm heartily tired of it in less than eight weeks, and I mean to find some escape-valve for my overcharged feelings beyond our state parade, and receptions in madame's parlor."

"I'm sure they're pleasant changes." "Well, then, I don't think so. It's funny enough to bob up and down before the Preceptress in practicing the exact inclination for a fashionable bow, and to glide along with the very least possible motion of the body in getting a graceful carriage, but I'm fairly aching for a breathing-spell beyond the reach of critical observation. I never could appreciate the blessing of an approving conscience—I can't remember a time when I was so long without misdeeds to repent of. I wouldn't be such a model of sweet decorum as you are for a kingdom."

"You've a limited field for any thing but decorous conduct," laughed her friend. "Our teachers don't tolerate any thing but implicit obedience." "Oh, don't they? Isa, dear, wouldn't it be nice to have a little moonlight festival all to ourselves down under the trees by the river? I've got a box full of goodies stored away for such an occasion which couldn't be persuaded to taste half so well here in the secure quiet of our rooms. There's nothing so very tempting in a supper under the trees on a frosty October night, but there will be something peculiarly exhilarating in a breath of free air. Don't say me nay, darling, for I have the portress bribed already to admit us at midnight, and I've got the key of the little boat, so we'll have a row before our escapade is over. You shall take your guitar, Isola, music is never so sweet as upon the water."

"Florry, you're joking, surely. Indeed I couldn't think of doing any thing so wrong." But Florry was bent upon mischief, and in the exuberance of her wild spirits had decided on this harmless scamper under the moonlit sky, the greatest charm it presented lying in the fact that it was a forbidden luxury.

"I wouldn't stop at that if I were fancy free, as you are," she asserted, laughingly.

"It's a fortunate thing that I occupy a responsible position as an engaged young lady, or I'd have some faithful lover at hand, just for the sake of defying the powers that be. Come, Isola, consent to bear me company, for fear I find worse."

It required more eloquence than this on Florry's part to persuade her more conscientious friend, but she was persuaded in the end. It really seemed that no harm could come of it further than was involved in the simple act of disobedience. They would not leave the grounds belonging to the establishment, except to row out a little distance upon the river; they were only stealing a couple of hours from the eight during which they were expected to have their eyelids sealed in sleep.

Eight hours! Little enough for the laborer who strikes with his brawny strength through ten of the rest of the twenty-four. Little enough for the worker whose brain is taxed for fifteen hours full, and who toses in that interval of necessary rest, oppressed by a weight of responsibility even in sleep.

Little enough for the tired underlings who served in the employ of Madame Molyneux. Little enough for the watchful Preceptress herself, who strove faithfully to execute her charge over the hundred or more young beings left in her care. Little enough for the happy, careless flock of girls with no trouble yet to break upon their repose, but what one of them would not have abridged the time by half with motives of mischief or amusement to urge them on?

Not Florry, surely, for she was like some untamed forest bird, escaped without the bounds of prison bars, as she raced over the short close turf of the slope leading down to the river. The Academy was a great dark pile, standing at the further end of the grounds, with scrubby evergreens skirting the paths between, and it was the blue tide of the Hudson rolling so calmly under the full radiance of the moon.

Florry's lunch-basket went down with a contemptuous toss, and her little dark round hat spun past it over the drifts of crisping leaves which early frosts were stealing from the row of noble old elms fringing the bank.

"Who could think of eating under such a glorious sky? And oh! how like a grand still lake the water is, almost as good as the sea on a quiet night, when there isn't a sail or a light to break it as you look out over the open space which alone lies between the two heavens—one above, the other below. Maiden, with me."

Come, Isola, we'll sing that together out upon the river. Oh, if you could know how I pant to float away on that quiet tide! When it comes my time to be wafted away—to go and join the angels I mean—I just wish Charon would take me up bodily and row me away over an eternity of sea."

Florry meant her sentiment truly enough, for, reared as she had been by the unceasing wave, she had a passionate love for the sea in all its varying moods.

"Come, Isola," she had thrown the slender chain from its guard on the shore, with a reckless clatter, into the little boat, and stood with one arched foot rocking on its edge, waiting to assist her companion in.

Isola drew back with something between a shudder and a thrill, a vague prescience of half terror and half delight, her lovely face bathed in the bright radiance of the full moon, grown wistful, yet startled through that dim, double influence of expectation and foreboding.

"Oh, Florry, it frightens me! We're doing wrong—I know we are. Let us go back and not run any greater risks of discovery."

"Risks, you darling little goose! Why, the risk is greater now than if we wait until Madame Preceptress has lost herself in the land of dreams. She's taking her prow about the premises now, and listening at the key-holes to discover if the girls are asleep or plotting treason. She'll give us an extra mark of good conduct for once—our room 'll be dark and quiet, as her strict rule enforces. No lecture for whispering out of hours from madame to-morrow."

"I wasn't thinking so much of that," Isola hesitated. "Florry, did you ever feel as though you were going straight out to meet your fate? As though you were tempting the future by going ahead—as if you would change your life somehow—make it different from what it would be if you were to turn back? I feel just that way now, and I'm afraid."

"Of course I have, and I always go straight ahead and get myself into all sorts of misuses in consequence. I don't believe in standing still in the world, and the only way to progress is to go ahead! Just reason in that conclusive and satisfactory manner, Isa. If you don't go to meet your fate, it will surely come to meet you. Put a bold face on and take time by the forelock."

Thus urged, Isola put her little soft hand into that of her friend and went forward to meet—her fate! They did not know it then—those two happy, care-free young girls—or they would not have laughed so lightly in the face of the shadowy future which was darkly foretold in Destiny's magic glass that night.

Florry managed her oars skillfully, and the tiny craft shot out "like a thing of life," over the silently rippling water. Crack! She leaned over the edge of the boat and anxiously inspected the uplifted dripping oar. It was split transversely half way up the broad, thin blade.

"Oh, now we shall have to go back," said Isola, with a long, tremulous sigh of relief.

"Not we. The oar is strong enough yet, and will hold out if I'm careful, as I shall be. Give up the dearest delight of the night? Not I. Take your guitar, Isola, and play an accompaniment while we sing 'O'er the Sea.'"

The guitar had been purposely forgotten in an arbor in the grounds that day. It was suspended now by a broad blue ribbon from Isola's neck, and she ran her fingers over the strings, drawing out silvery, tinkling notes.

Fresh and clear the two young voices floated out upon the water. Catching more and more of the spirit of the music as the song progressed, their voices swelled with the melody, rung sweet and strong through the still night air.

"Was not the sea
Made for the free,

Land for courts and chains alone?
Here we are slaves,
But on the waves,
Love and Liberty's all our own.
No eye to watch, and no tongue to wound us,
All earth forgot, and all heaven round us—
A strong, mellow barytone broke into the song, and as the startled girls lapsed into sudden silence, carried the chorus through triumphantly alone:

"Then come o'er the sea,
Maiden, with me,
Mine through sunshine, storm, and snows;
Seasons may roll,
But the true soul
Burns the same, where'er it goes."

A skiff shot out from a turn of the overhanging bank—a skiff, whose one occupant trolled out the ditty, as he guided his course by swift sweeps of the white, glistening paddles.

With a quick gasp Florry bent to her oars. It would never do to have it noised about the neighborhood that two of Madame Molyneux's pupils were out at such an hour on such a "lark."

The little boat swung about, a long pull and a strong pull sent it skimming away on its backward course. Then, crack! crack!—the faithless oar snapped short off; the frail cockle-shell spun around with velocity which took away Isola's breath, and exercised all Florien's skill in boat-craft to keep clear of the rocks, which, just here near the shore, rose up in the bed of the stream.

In a moment more the second boat brought up beside them, its occupant, hat in hand, offering his assistance.

"Ladies, permit me! How fortunate I chanced to be at hand. That is rather an awkward accident if you have far to row."

"Not very far," Florien answered, doubtful whether or not she detected an undercurrent of fun in the gentleman's tone. She suspected he was quite well aware that his own sudden appearance was the cause of their panic and subsequent misfortune.

"There is no occasion to tax your kindness, sir. We will just float back with the current, and can readily land with the aid of one oar."

"But it is such a delicious night," urged the intruder. "Too beautiful by far to desert the river yet. Let me offer my services and persuade you to remain. Your boat is roomy enough to accommodate another, and my oars are transferable. Let me beg that you will not refuse me the privilege of prolonging your trip."

"Really—I don't know," hesitated Florry.

"I suppose it's the proper thing for me to introduce myself," continued he, coolly, unimpaired by her half-protest. "I have the happiness to present myself—Louis Kenyon. I rowed up from the village to sketch the point as it appears by moonlight. I can't give any very favorable account of myself. I'm one of those rolling stones that gather no moss—here one day, and the next as far distant as steam power can transport me. I am an artist in a small way, make landscape painting a specialty, and have been fortunate enough to secure sundry orders from wealthy city people who chance to have peculiar interest in scenery on the Hudson—possession gives that, you are to understand, and not devotion to the sublime cause of art. Not an alluring record I am well aware, but such as I am, I'm at your service, ladies."

His very off-hand frankness was a surer passport in this case than a clearer record might have been. These inexperienced school-girls were just romantic enough to overlook all the social gradations which society makes much of, and to accept their unexpected escort at his own representation.

It was a smooth, dark, boyish face Florry looked up into, with black eyes that glittered beneath his low, wide hat, and a thin-lipped, scarlet mouth, which smiled a smile that could be very winning in its sweetness. A face the like of which she had never seen but once in all her life before, and that other one which flashed up before her remembrance had belonged to an Italian organ-grinder, who, passing through Beach-cliff, had stopped to play at the gate belonging to aunt Deb's cottage.

"Kenyon!" she repeated, and, led away by that recurring memory, she added: "Surely that is not an Italian name."

The new-comer flashed a penetrating glance upon her as he stooped to take the oar from her yielding hand.

"Why Italian?" queried he.

And having betrayed the bent of her thoughts, Florry could do no less than explain their origin. Laughing commentaries on the same established a free intercourse of words which would scarcely commend with an entire stranger.

"I only wish it might have been so," he asserted. "I should have forwarded a claim of previous acquaintanceship."

He roved them up the stream, chatting in an easy strain, which led them to forget the questionable propriety of their course. He sang for them in that rich barytone voice of his in return, he laughingly said, for the song they had unwittingly given him. And just as the clock in the village steeple tolled midnight, he landed them at the verge of the Academy grounds.

Lingering and casting about him still for some means of prolonging this novel, pleasant interview, he espied the lunch-basket where Florry's scornful hand had tossed it.

"Two hours rowing under an October moon, and the air tinged with October frost, is calculated to remind one of an appetite," he laughed. "Miss Redesdale, be hospitable and ask me to partake."

"If you will, but I warn you it will be of frugal fare. There are plenty of dainty sweetmeats such as gentlemen despise, I believe, and nothing besides except hard crackers and sour wine, which I bribed Susan to provide by the gift of my second-best pair of raw-silk gloves."

"Then," he retorted, "you will have the knowledge that you are supping off your second-best pair of raw-silk gloves, while I shall enjoy nectar and ambrosia of the gods!"

So another half-hour was lingered out before good-night was spoken.

And that night, while Florry slept soundly after the escapade which had been born of her mischievousness during her first interview with Isola Snow, her friend, how blissfully happy in remembering the brilliant glance of the young landscape artist, which had melted to infinite admiring tenderness when it rested lingeringly upon her dainty self.

CHAPTER VIII.

ONE NEW YEAR'S EVE.

WITH all her dainty grace, her rare, fair, bright young beauty, Isola Snow was simply a nobody, or that worse than a nobody—a charity child.

She had been reared in a foundling hospital, and when five years of age adopted by a delicate young widow lady, who lavished a mother's fondness upon the little waif. Three years passed like life in an enchanted land; then Mrs. Snow's physician ordered her away to Europe, and little Isola was placed at Madame Molyneux's school.

Her board and tuition were paid for a period of three years, and a thousand dollars besides placed in Madame's hands for the benefit of the child. Mrs. Snow's absence might be prolonged indefinitely, and she wished to make secure provision for her little adopted daughter.

But Mrs. Snow died in her first year abroad, and ever since Isola had been an inmate of the school. Her portion, judiciously expended by Madame's own hand, was exhausted long ago; but she had fitted herself to become a resident governess in the institution which had for half her life been her only home, and was already intrusted with certain classes among the younger pupils, while she pursued the higher branches of study which she had not yet completely mastered.

She was a favorite with the entire establishment from the Preceptress down to the newest pupil entered. Madame had won golden opinions through her liberal treatment of the friendless waif, but, being a thoroughly conscientious woman, with a kindly heart, she felt herself well repaid for all her care by the example and influence of her docile and intelligent pupil.

It was esteemed as a mark of high favor conferred upon Florian Redesdale that she was admitted to Isola's close companionship and assigned to be her room-mate. But the two were warm friends from the very first, and soon grew to be inseparable companions, who saw and shared each other's joys and sorrows.

If Isola was of a yielding, trusting nature, easily influenced as we have seen, Florry possessed her share of common prudence when inclined to make use of that ordinary quality. She chose to be guided by it now, and as their escapade of the last chapter was not followed by detection and well-merited reproof, she was quite willing to stand proof against any such future temptation.

A forced restraint or manifest disapprobation was apt to bring Florry's spirit of opposition up in arms, but left to her own free will she could issue the declaration, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" and enforce it firmly.

So it chanced that she thought nothing more of the handsome young actor in that night's scene, until one day, a week later, she came face to face with him in leaving a class-room where she had been occupied to a rather unusual hour.

He passed her with no other token of recognition than the courteous bow he would have accorded any pupil in the school. Florry, doubting the evidence of her senses almost, turned to some one standing near.

"Who was that?" she asked.

"Mr. Kenyon, the new teacher of landscape drawing. Isn't he splendid? The girls are half-wild over him, and all petitioning to join his class. You'd better give in your name, Miss Redesdale."

"Not I," answered Florry. "I've neither taste nor talent that way."

"And you knew he was here!" she ex-

claimed, when she found herself alone with Isola. "Provoking girl! why didn't you tell me? I wonder if it's probable he'll betray that wild-goose chase of ours?"

"I'm sure he will not," Isola answered, confidently, while the bright light deepened on her cheeks. "You know how fond I am of drawing, and Madame herself persuaded me to join his class to-day. We're invited into her parlor to-night, Florry—he's to be there, I believe, with the German professor and the French dancing-master; Miss Linch and Fraulein Gratz, of course, to keep the equilibrium."

And, by skillfully leading the conversation, Isola warded off a repetition of the question why she had not informed her friend of the young artist's engagement in the school. Perhaps it was self-acknowledged inability to answer it which led her to do so.

A half-dozen of the elder girls were assembled in Madame's parlor for the evening. Madame's little sociables were really charming affairs of their kind, and were given to propitiate that confidence and ease of manner which are so indispensable to well-bred young ladyhood.

Here Mr. Kenyon was presented in due form, but Madame, with her usual discretion, kept him occupied between elderly Miss Linch and fussy Fraulein Gratz for the greater part of the evening.

There was a little music, a little edifying conversation in which every one present was expected to take a part, some practical illustrations regarding the manner in which evening visitors should be received and entertained, and refreshments always served punctually at half-past nine. These consisted invariably of creamed coffee, crisp caraway cakes, with nuts, apples, or oranges following. A very stiffly-monotonous routine it appears in *resumé*, but the careful Preceptress has the tact and ability to render it all very pleasant in reality.

It was until coffee had been served, and the little company engaged in cracking almonds and English walnuts, cracking mild jokes in accompaniment, that Mr. Kenyon found a place at Florry's side.

"How in the world did you find an *entree*?" she asked. "I've been doubting my own senses and Isola's word, you seemed so utterly unconscious of ever having seen me before."

"Madame is lynx-eyed and I thought you wouldn't wish me to betray you to suspicion. Do you know my position here?"

"Drawing-master, somebody said. Is that the utmost height of your ambition, Mr. Kenyon?"

"Ambition isn't the truest aspiration the human heart can entertain."

"No? It's the most prevalent, isn't it? Acknowledge, sir, that you have some very dazzling, brilliant future in anticipation. I never heard of an artist, whose soul was in his work, who didn't see every thing but embraced in the actual present *couleur-de-roze*."

"What a discriminating young lady! I do acknowledge, and dare to ask in return—what are *your* aspirations, Miss Redesdale?"

"Mine?—oh, my fate is fixed."

Was it only impulse that tempted her to flash that golden gleaming cret on the slender left forefinger before his eyes, and to him in laughing undertone:

"Love my love if friend thou'll be, Love my love not if enemy."

"Miss Redesdale!" It was Madame who came gliding in between. Watchful, soft-voiced Madame, on the alert to nip this suspicion of a flirtation in the bud. "Miss Redesdale, it is your turn to play, I believe. That anthem you were practicing last."

Louis Kenyon's glance followed her as she took her place on the music-stool, then turning, he parted a curtain and pressed his forehead against the cool glass of the window. The thin scarlet lips of the man compressed to a stern line, the black eyes glittered with an angry scintillation for the second space of time. It was replaced at once by a look of amused gleam, and that wondrously-sweet smile came to light his features like some glorious inspiration. And this was the broken-linked chain of thought which flashed through his mind during the moment his unseeing eyes were turned through the shadowed pane toward the star-gemmed dome of heaven:

"Engaged! Did Madame, my mother, know that? I wonder? Ah, passion! rage if you will, this has decided me. Love, sweet love is dearer than ambition."

As he turned, his softened gaze met the appealing, anxious one of Isola Snow, and before the dazzling brightness of that smile of his, she flushed with that new delight which had so lately come into her life.

After that time Florian saw little of him. He had taken a class at the Academy for only a short term, which ended with the close of the old year. Florry—impulsive, willful Florry—was devoting herself, mind and heart, to the task of fitting herself for that place in the world which she was to take by-and-by. She came here determined to make of herself a cultivated and accomplished woman, for the sake of Walter Lynne—she found herself forgetting the object in the keen delight she discovered in the pursuit.

Already, though she was yet unconscious of it, her idol was crumbling from the high pedestal where her girlish fancy had placed him.

She remained at the school through the Christmas holidays. Thanks to aunt Deb's care, she had the solid English education which may be attained by every average American girl—better, perhaps, than had the rudiments been acquired at a fashionable boarding-school such as this. Now she was devoting herself almost exclusively to the study of music and languages. She was not lonely during these holidays when the school was almost deserted. She had the general parlor and the grand piano to herself now, whenever she chose, and the long, silent hours to pore uninterruptedly over the French and Italian translations which were beginning to open their charms to her studious comprehension.

The bright, brief winter days sped on, until the last one was dropping from the old year's lingering grasp. The sun went down in a ruddy glow, and the shadows of the gray twilight came steaming across the snow-robed earth.

Florry sat in her own room, quite idle for once, dreaming some delicious fancies, undefined and fleeting as the fantastic shapes she was tracing in the burning embers of the open grate. Deliciously contented was she as she sat there, quite oblivious of the swiftly-fitting moments, until a soft step came tapping through the corridor, and the door swung back to admit

Isola. She started up then with something like a feeling of guilty, regretful consciousness, as she remembered the change the morrow would bring her friend.

Isola's school-girl days were over. On the morrow—New Year's Day—she was to dine in state with the Preceptress, and after that she would be installed formally in her position among the resident governesses.

Already her own apartment was assigned her in another portion of the building, opening into a dormitory where a half-dozen straight narrow beds accommodated as many of the younger pupils in the school who were to be her especial charges after this. This night was the last she would be at liberty to spend with her girl friend.

"Oh!" cried Florry, in an accent of self-reproach, "I meant to have both the room and myself brightened up against you should come, Isa, dear."

Isola dropped a large soft package she carried into the nearest chair, and let her arm fall caressingly over the other's shoulder.

"Don't stir, Florian. I want you just as you are for a little time. Never mind the lights; this soft glow from the fire is far better. Let me sit on a stool at your feet, and do you baby me for the last time."

"For the last time! What a tragic view you take of it, dear! You are going to do battle for yourself, and you will have a weight of responsibility which may be heavy on such inexperienced shoulders, but you must always be the same with me, Isa—nothing must ever cloud our friendship, you know."

The bright head laid now upon her knee moved restlessly, and Florry stroked the glittering golden hair with a gentle hand, though she went on speaking impetuously.

"You're quite too dainty for such a life of hard labor, Isola. I'd never let you enter upon it, but I'm not my own mistress yet, and I'm to remain here for a year. When I'm once fairly settled in a home of my own, you shall come and live with me as my companion—my sister. You shall stay here a single day after I go. I'll have to ask my stepmother's consent at first, but she writes me such considerate, affectionate letters that I am beginning to think my first judgment of her may have been hasty, after all. She seems really disposed to do her whole duty by me—to actually care for me, for papa's sake. I don't think she'll object to any reasonable wish of mine, but that is all so far in the future we needn't think of it yet."

"Oh, how good you are to me!" cried Isola, tremulously, not lifting her face from the shadow of the other's lap. "Every one is kind to me—kinder far than I deserve. What makes you love me, Florry?"

"Who could help it, you darling? I've got a little New Year's present for you, Isa; shall I show you now?"

"Not just yet. Sing to me first—some lullaby. What a baby I am coaxing you to make of me!"

Florry sang a soothing, dreamy little air. The bright head lay so still, the breathing became so hushed, that she dropped her finger-tips softly on the shadowed face, thinking her friend had fallen asleep. The round cheeks were wet with silently-flowing tears.

"Crying, Isola! What grieves you, darling? Can't you trust me, your own Florry?"

Dashing her tears away, Isola sprang up with a queer little gasp between a sob and a laugh.

"I must be because I am so happy. Oh, I am such a wicked, ungrateful creature to have such true friends! See, what Madame has done for me—dear Madame! And some of the girls call her harsh and arbitrary! Why, she's been kind as a mother could be to me."

She struck a light, and shook out the loose package she had brought in with her. It fell apart, a glistening robe of soft gray silk. With hasty, tremulous fingers, Isola removed her school dress of blue merino and arrayed herself in the new garment.

"Oh, how pretty! And my gift will just suit it!" cried Florry, delightedly.

Her gift was a dainty lace set, the collar clasped by a pearl spray which seemed an emblem in its purity of the fair girl it adorned.

"There, you are sweet enough for a bride. Why, Isa, how nervous you are! What made you start so? Are you going to sit in all that finery, or will you put on a wrapper, while we make a cozy evening of it?"

"I'm going out for a time, Florian. Madame Molyneux gave me permission—that is, I'm to take a note to Miss Vincent, and I must go right away, before it is later. I'll just tuck up my dress if you'll lend me your big dark cloak to cover it."

"Going to Miss Vincent's? Why, what can the Preceptress mean to send you? Get the porter to take the note, can't you?"

"No—indeed—I promised—"

"Very well, then, I'll go along," announced Florian, diving into a dressing-closet after her warmest shawls.

"Oh no, Florry, please don't! Something very like terror drilled through the girl's beseeching tone. "I would really rather go alone. Don't think me an ungrateful wretch, dear, but do let me have my own way this once."

Florian faced about with a look of hurt wonderment.

"Of course, as you like best, Isa. I didn't mean to force my company upon you."

"Don't be angry with me, dear. Kiss me, won't you, before I go?"

Florry's momentary wrath melted away before the distress of the fair upraised face. She kissed her heartily on either cheek, and then, as an idea occurred to her, put out a detaining hand.

"I'm not angry, but I'm anxious. It seems absurd to think that you could do any thing wrong, but are you quite sure you haven't some hidden reason that will not bear the light?"

Isola hesitated, then uplifted her truthful eyes and answered, bravely:

"I have a reason, one that I can't tell even to you, Florry. But you, of all people, will not doubt me?"

"Never," replied her friend, with all a girl's warmth of assurance.

She watched from the window to see Isola's muffled figure flit alone over the snow-lit path below, and then turned back to pass a restless, interminable evening. She watched and waited for the other's return until midnight, then went to bed, and, despite her resolution to the contrary, fell into a sound, untroubled sleep.

Daylight streamed in through open curtains when she awoke, and the first sight that met her eyes was Isola at her bedside.

"Up and dressed already?" she asked.

"Why, what a sluggard I must be. Did I sleep so soundly as not to hear the bell?" Just then the bell rung its summons through the great, almost empty building, and Florry, springing out of bed, saw that her friend had neither undressed nor slept.

A flame-like fever-heat was burning in her cheeks, her eyes were dilated and unusually brilliant. She came and knelt down by her side, pressing her hot cheek against Florry's hand.

"Promise me that you won't speak of my absence last night," said she. "If any one should ever question you, don't let it be known. Promise me, dear."

"Of course I shall not," answered Florry, in some surprise, noticing that the other did not offer the morning kiss they usually exchanged.

Instinctively Florry realized that some cloud had come between them, that never again would her sweet girl-friend be the same to her as in these months past.

CHAPTER IX.

GOING AWAY.

MADAME MOLYNEUX wished to see Miss Redesdale, at once, in her private audience-room.

Miss Redesdale answered the summons, wondering on the way what Madame could possibly want of her. When she was with pent-up mischief, when her exuberant spirits bubbled over in all sorts of daring freaks, when, accustomed to setting her small defiance against aunt Deb's stern restraining will, she had accepted it as a matter of consequence the same course was to be followed here, such a summons would scarcely have caused her much surprise.

But Madame Molyneux was a woman of tact. She was not blind to those first batterings of offense against her rules. She read her wayward charge in a day, and by appearing blind, adopted the surest means of bringing her within the required curb, until now Florry had been a very decorous, studious and trustworthy Florry indeed.

So now what could the Preceptress want of her in the private audience-room, whose doors were supposed to open only to the reluctant entrance of a culprit into the judge's presence, but always mercifully shut in the severity of the lecture attending the sentence—whatever it might be. The offender might come forth with tingling ears and burning cheeks, but not a whisper of what occurred there was breathed to anxious watchers on the outer side. So, with an undisturbed front, but not without an inward tremor, Florry walked into the dreaded presence.

The Preceptress did not appear so very formidable at sight. A tall, angular, stern-faced woman of fifty, with a soft voice and mild, blue eyes, whose expression could wonderfully soften the rather grim countenance. She carried New England precision in every motion, softened to stereotyped gracefulness by habitual posturing, and there were those who whispered that fashionable Madame Molyneux had sprung from a one-time simple Massachusetts school-ma'am.

It may have been so, for French schools, like French millinery establishments, have sprung into undeniable popularity, and despite the assertion of the famed Bard of Avon, there is much in a name.

"Ah, Miss Redesdale, be seated." Madame was gracious. She was also straight to the point—she never waived questioning.

This was Monday, in the second week of January. The school term was regularly resumed.

Had Miss Redesdale been absent from the building on the last night of December—New Year's Eve?

No, Miss Redesdale positively had not been absent.

That was all Madame wished to inquire. She had been so informed, and herself believing it to be a misstatement—unintentional, of course—felt in duty bound to make inquiry that she might have the assertion falsified. It was against Madame's principles to tempt one pupil to betray another, but Florry went out of her presence, feeling somewhat that she had given a clue to the identity of the one who really was absent on New Year's Eve. So she had, for of all present there were only those two upon whom suspicion could fall.

She was ill at ease thinking of it, but as the days went by and no further perceptible move was made, the impression wore away.

She saw little of Isola now. Her time was occupied with new duties she strove faithfully to perform. She was changed to Florian in some vague way which the latter could not define. She knew that some shadow—some secret—had risen up between them, that they would never hold the same sweet, close, confidential companionship they had enjoyed for a brief, happy time.

The winter days dropped away one by one, like beads told on some placid nun's rosary, and March was half-way through with its boisterous changeable days and frigid nights.

Florry roomed alone now since her friend had taken up her new position. On this March evening—a quiet, freezing evening following a sunny day—she stood by her window softly repeating a difficult clause in her French lesson which was doing its best to evade her memory.

Out in the remote paths, with their skirting of close evergreens, she was watching idly some moving shadow which seemed endowed with a persistency in taking human shape. It did not strike her that it really was a human form until she saw a second shadow stealing in its track, at some distance still, but creeping nearer as it could flit unobserved over open spaces to the cover of shrub or tree.

The first shape carried some familiar element in its movement which suggested Isola; after a moment of watching Florian knew that it *was* Isola.

Waiting for nothing more, she snatched at some covering for her head and shoulders, and ran lightly down the flights of broad, shallow steps, which led to the entrance floor. The great doors had not yet been closed for the night, and she passed on her way without impediment.

Swiftly threading the paths to that distant one where the two shadows flitted in slow advance, Florian was almost there when her foot slipped, she caught in a vain attempt to save herself, and fell prostrate on a deceptive glare of ice.

She struggled to her feet in an instant, but her head was throbbing in a confused, painful whirl from a severe concussion. The second shadow came forward from the shadow to her side, revealing to Florry's astonished eyes the Preceptress herself.

"You have injured yourself, my dear," said Madame's soft voice. "Come, lean on

me while I assist you within. The park is quite unsafe with these frequent thaws and freezes."

Florry congratulated herself when she was alone that her own untoward accident had preserved her friend from the chance of discovery through Madame's sharp watchfulness that once—discovery of what, she experienced a feeling of half-resentment to admit she did not know. She would warn Isola to-morrow that her actions, subject to suspicion, were under surveillance. But on the morrow the effects of her fall culminated in a severe headache which kept her to her room all the day.

It was almost evening when Isola came to her, looking pale and with swollen, tear-blind eyes.

"I have stolen in to say good-by, Florry. I could not go away without seeing you."

"Why, Isa, where are you going?" questioned Florry, in amazement.

"Away from here—anywhere. I am dismissed from the school."

"For what cause? Tell me. What does it all mean?"

"I have been disobeying the rules, and it is quite proper I should be sent away. Madame was most grieved than angered, and she was not unkind. She was right in deciding that I must not stay. No one knows I came to you, but I must not linger here. Kiss me, won't you, once before I go."

It was the same request she had made once before in almost the very same words, but this time Florry did not comply with it; clasping her face in her two hands she refused to release her.

"You shall not go. I will plead your cause with Madame, and if I fail you must go to Miss Vincent while I write to my stepmother or to aunt Deb—to some one who will take care of you until I am home."

"Darling Florry, I do thank you with all my heart for all your kindness to me," said Isola, sobbingly. "But I must go now—I really must! I am not friendless—I shall go to one who has a right to protect me. Oh, Florry, did you never suspect?"

"What?" Florry was breathless and pale with grief.

"I must tell you, darling. I can't go away and leave you to think the ill of me I fear Madame does. I was married on New Year's Eve. I can't tell you any more, but I am a true man's loyal wife. Heaven bless you, dear—good-by! Good-by!"

She loosened herself forcibly from the detaining hands, and the closing door shut her out from Florry's sight, and the great school building shut her out too ere long.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 149.)

OLD SOLITARY, The Hermit Trapper:

OR,
THE DRAGON OF SILVER LAKE.

BY OLL COOMES.

AUTHOR OF "HAWKEYE HARRY," "BOY SPE," "HONOLULU," "THE SOUTHERN," "MATH NOTCH," "THE DESTROYER," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XV.

SAVAGE CUNNING.

WHEN Harry Thomas discovered, on arising from his half-slumber, that his friends were all gone, and that a part of the island had also disappeared, a feeling akin to horror crept over him. He thought his own negligence, perhaps, had something to do with the disappearance of his friends. His first conclusion was that they had been drowned, for they had gone to sleep on that portion of the island that had evidently sunk beneath the waters of the lake.

What he should do he could not tell. Like one bewildered, he stood and gazed around him, and over the lake with a feeling of horror and desolation. A savage yell came faintly to his ears from the northern side of the lake, and aroused him from his stupor of awe to a true sense of his own peril. He started, grasped his rifle, and ran his eyes over the lake with a keen, searching glance.

Far out upon its glassy bosom, over twenty rods from where he stood, he saw what appeared to be another sand-bar. He fixed his eyes upon it with a steady gaze, and as they became more accustomed to the object, he saw it was a sand-island. And, what seemed the most singular about it was, that he could see the dark forms of four or five persons lying upon it, plainly outlined against the white sand.

What did it mean? Our young friend endeavored his brain for an answer, but the more he thought over the matter, the more perplexed his mind became.

Still he kept his eyes fixed upon the bar. He saw that the dark figures upon it did not move, but he suddenly came to the startling conclusion that the island itself was moving!

To assure himself of this fact beyond a doubt, he sighted an object far beyond, and in range with the island; then with steady eye he watched the line, and saw that the island was actually moving.

Something of the real state of affairs now rushed across the young hunter's mind, and for evidence of his suspicion, he turned to the north side of the island, and began examining that portion from which a part of the whole had so mysteriously disappeared. He found depressions in the sand that convinced him that a flat-boat, or raft, had been lodged against it quite recently. And he now had every reason to believe that the raft, or boat, whichever it was, was there when they landed; and so cunningly covered with sand as to appear, to one stranger to the place, as a part of the island itself. In fact, there was not a single doubt of this being the exact nature of the whole case.

The savages, apparently suspecting that the young hunters would flee to the island, to spend the remainder of the night, had preceded them there with a float of logs, which they had moored at the end of the sand-bar, and covered so cunningly as to appear the driest part of the island. Where the Indians had concealed themselves was a mystery. However, had the hunters been experienced hard-boiled, they would never have permitted themselves to be caught in such a trap.

Harry Thomas was totally ignorant of the number of savages engaged in towing his companions away. But he was a brave youth, and resolved to save his friends at all hazards.

glassy surface of the lake toward the floating island.

When within two rods of the raft, he permitted his canoe to come to a stand, so that he could ascertain, if possible, the direction from whence he might expect trouble, and its probable magnitude. But to his surprise he could not see a single savage, nor from whence the floating raft received its motive power. He could see, however, that it was moving, but so slowly that there was no danger of its motion disturbing the sleep of the four hunters.

Harry placed his rifle in a position to be readily grasped, then plied the paddle again. The canoe shot forward under his vigorous strokes, and in a minute its prow touched the raft.

It had been his intention to arouse his friends from their sleep by a vociferous shout, but as he saw no sign of savages, even when the raft was reached, he concluded that as great a silence as possible would be more appropriate.

So he reached forward with his paddle, and touched one of his companions, whom he succeeded in arousing with repeated "punching" in the back.

The fellow arose to a sitting posture, yawned drowsily, and began rubbing his eyes and muttering to himself in an incoherent tone.

"Sh! Bart!" cautioned Harry, touching him with the paddle, "we're in great danger."

Bart Stanley started up wide awake, and in a minute Harry succeeded in getting him to understand the critical nature of their situation. No time was to be lost, and Stanley turned, and arousing his companions, hurried them and their effects into the canoe.

Harry Thomas at once plied the paddle, and sent the craft back toward the island, Burt explaining to them as they went the nature of the danger from which they had been so opportunely saved by Harry.

They had not made more than half the distance between the island and the raft, when they happened to glance back and saw three Indians standing on the latter, gesticulating in a violent manner. Where they had been concealed, unless it was under the raft, they could form no idea.

Some were for firing upon the savages, but others objected, and they pushed on toward the sand-bar. They were within fifty yards of it when they made another startling discovery. A party of savages had taken possession of the island during Harry's absence, and a short distance north of this they saw two canoes loaded with warriors bearing directly down upon them at a rapid speed.

"Boys!" exclaimed Harry, "the red devils are after us, three to one! We will have to fly and seek safety in the reeds along the south side of the lake."

"Yes, yes!" responded one of his comrades, "lead thereaways quickly, Harry, quickly!"

Harry headed the prow of the canoe southward, and plied the paddle vigorously. He was greatly assisted by his companions, who used the butts of their rifles as paddles.

They did not gain upon the savages, but succeeded in maintaining their distance between. It was an exciting chase, and lasted for several minutes, when our friends' canoe glided into that wilderness of reeds that grew far out into the water along the southern side of the lake.

Under this cover they entertained little fear of being found by the cunning Sioux, nevertheless they lost no time in working their way into the heart of the miniature forest. They struck into one of those passages, cut by the animals that made the reeds their haunts, and laying aside the paddle, they drew the canoe along by means of the reeds. In this manner they worked themselves through the intricate mazes of the wilderness for several minutes, when they halted to listen.

But all was silent as desolation with the single exception of the gentle rustling of the reeds in the soft night-wind.

"What shall we do, boys?" asked Harry Thomas; "go on, or remain here?"

"We will probably be as safe here as anywhere," replied Burt Stanley.

"Very likely," replied another. "The whole Indian nation seems congregated around this lake."

"Yes, and I am afraid our old friend Solitary, and detective Dart have got into trouble," said young Thomas. "I heard a rifle-shot, and a fearful yelling around on the north side of the lake while ago."

"Rest assured Old Solitary will take care of himself, but as to Dart, I—"

"Sh! sh!" cautioned young Thomas; "hark! listen!"

Each one bent his head and listened intently.

They started. Somewhere within that forest of reeds they could hear a canoe raking through one of those narrow thoroughfares. The sound was so very faint that they could not tell the direction from whence it came, but as the canoe came nearer—as they knew it was by the increasing sound—they found it was approaching from the south.

Their first impulse was to flee, but calm reflection convinced them that it would only hazard their situation, for they could not pass through the reeds without creating a noise that would be sufficient to direct the movements of the foe. Moreover, they would be just as apt to run into danger as to run from it, and so they concluded to remain where they were.

The prow of their canoe was headed westward, and just before it, crossing its course at right angles, ran one of those passages made by the others. It was wider than most of them, and the flags above failing to meet, a narrow belt of moonlight defined the course of the passage along the surface of the water. There was quite a patch of light lying on the water where the two trails crossed, and this was not over five feet from the prow of our friends' canoe. Any object crossing this could be plainly seen, while the hunters were concealed within the impenetrable shadows.

The raking sound produced by the approaching canoe, convinced our friends that it was coming up the wide, moonlit passage, crossing at their bows.

They listened intently for some sound that would tell them whether the canoe contained friends or foes. But they could hear nothing save the raking of the reeds against the sides of the craft.

They felt in hopes it was Old Solitary, though they had little upon which to maintain these hopes. For the canoe was evidently a large one, and was, judging from the slowness with which it moved, heavily loaded.

Our friends awaited its approach in

breathless suspense. There was not a doubt now, but that it would pass along the moonlit trail; for already they could see tiny waves dashing across the patch of light before them, and could hear them creeping among the stalks like wriggling serpents.

Every moment they expected it to burst upon their view, for now it was so close that Harry Thomas, who sat nearest the passage, was sure he heard a sound like a suppressed sob.

At length the prow of the craft came slowly into view, as did also the hands and arms of a savage, who was reaching forward, hand-over-hand, and drawing the canoe along by means of the reeds. As more of the canoe came into view, it showed the savage was standing up. Behind him sat two other warriors with their backs to their course, and between these two, and two others that sat in the stern of the boat, were Ethel Leland and Millie Fayville, locked in each other's embrace and sobbing bitterly.

They were helpless captives!

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SECRET OF THE HAWTHORN.

CAPTAIN ROLAND DISBROWE went on with his "military" preparations about the settlement, manifesting no uneasiness over what he had seen and heard. In fact, no one could have told that his heart was in a tumult of emotions, and that his spirit was chafing in bitter suspense.

He thought the summer would go down, so anxious was he to know what secret the hawthorn back of the Crystal Spring would hold for Ethel. But when the sun had finally set, the captain stole out into the openings, and by a circuitous route reached the Crystal Spring.

Forthwith he went to the hawthorn, and in the crotch of the numerous limbs that put out he found a small folded paper.

With an eager, triumphant flash of the eyes he unfolded the paper, and vanished from the spot. Out in the openings where the shadows were not so deep, he stopped, unfolded the paper, and read:

"Ethel, my darling, Heaven still favors me. But one more link is wanted in the chain of evidence to prove my innocence."

Your suffering, yet affectionate

HUSBAND.

"Great God!" burst from Disbrowe's lips. His face grew deathly pale, and his hand trembled violently. "Husband!" he hissed, between his set teeth. "Is it possible that Ethel Leland has a husband? Surely not! But this paper is evidence to that effect. Curse the luck I am I to lose Wold-cain Heights after years of faithful labor? No, no, I shall not—I will not be defeated; by the gods of Olympus I will not! Ay, ay, Jabez Dart! I see into your pretended search for the Hart's Ford murderer. It is the heir to Wold-cain that you are hunting, but you may yet fail!"

There was something in the tone as well as the looks of the speaker, that implied a secret resolve—a murderous threat.

For a moment he stood, as if undecided in his course, but at length he turned, and retracing his steps to the spring, put the paper back in the crotch of the hawthorn.

"Now," he muttered to himself, "I must find out whether Wancosta, the Sioux chief, escaped the Monster of the Lake or not."

He returned to his stable, and procuring his fleetest horse, the next minute he was mounted and flying westward like the wind.

"Millie, will you not take a walk with me to the Crystal Spring?"

"Of course I will, sweet sister; but why not go down to the brook? Will it not be a more pleasant walk?"

"It would be, Millie, but then, I have an errand down to the spring."

"Then we will go there, Ethel, but we must not stay long, for there may be danger about."

The sisters each threw a light shawl hoodlike over her head, and leaving the house, walked briskly down toward the spring.

It was now almost dark, and that fear and uneasiness which seems so consonant with the gloom of night took possession of the maidens. They started at every sound and shrank closer to each other with fear.

At length they reached the spring, and going to the hawthorn, Ethel took therefrom the missive that Captain Disbrowe had read a few minutes before.

A cry of joy burst involuntarily from her lips.

"What is it, Ethel? what is the matter?" asked Mildred.

"Oh, sister!" she exclaimed, holding out the paper in her hand, "that paper has either good news or bad for me!"

"Who put it there, sister?"

"Then it is from him?"

"I may, and it may not be. But, sister, I will read it; then I will break to you a secret that will no doubt startle you!"

Ethel opened the paper, and by the few lingering rays of light managed to read it.

Another cry burst from her lips. It was a cry of infinite joy.

"Oh, Millie," she said, "my future life promises to be joyous!"

"As the wife of Captain Roland Disbrowe?" asked Millie, with a merry laugh.

"No, no, Millie; I will never marry Roland Disbrowe."

"Because I am a wife already."

"What?" exclaimed Millie, "you a wife already? You are jesting, Ethel."

"I am not. Five years ago, when I was seventeen, Frank Hammond and I were married by Parson White in secret. Those that witnessed our marriage were all sworn friends of Frank's, and they promised to keep the whole matter a secret until Matt Fayville, our dear father, Millie, would sanction the union; for you know he did not like Frank, for there existed an old family feud between the Hammonds and Fayvilles."

"Yes, yes, Ethel; I see now why you have been so sad-hearted ever since the Hart's Ford murder, and why you have not married Disbrowe."

"That is the reason, Millie. I knew Frank was still alive somewhere. At least I thought so, and that is why I kept putting Roland Disbrowe off. But at last, with crushed hopes, I promised, in a moment of desperation, to become his wife. But that promise will never be fulfilled. My darling Frank lives, and may soon come to me!"

"But will Detective Dart not arrest him for the murder of Henry Hohn?"

"No, Dart is Frank's best friend, and he is going to bring a terrible piece of villainy to light soon—something concerning the Hart's Ford murder, and which will clear Frank of the crime!"

"If Frank was innocent, Ethel, why did he flee from the law?"

"Because he had a secret enemy, who implicated him in the murder by a cunning trap, and this same enemy was prepared to swear him to the gallows. Frank knew it, and fled, feeling satisfied that time would put every thing right."

"Did Frank know who that enemy of his was?"

"No. Nor do I. But Detective Dart does, but would not tell me. But, then, Millie, I have suspected who the person is."

"Indeed, sister! Who?"

"I believe it is—"

She did not finish the sentence, for there was a rush of feet behind them, blankets were thrown over their heads, stifling their cries; then they felt themselves lifted aloft in strong arms and borne swiftly away!

They were captives, and their captors were painted and plumed Indian warriors.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 147.)

Mr. Bliss' Narrow Escape.

A WARNING TO YOUNG MEN.

BY EBEN E. REXFORD.

"JOSEPH, I do wish you'd get married," Mrs. Green said to her brother one morning, for, perhaps, the five hundredth time since he had lived under the roof of his brother-in-law.

"I don't doubt it, in the least," answered Mr. Bliss, dryly. "I suppose you'd be delighted to get rid of me."

"Now, Joseph Bliss," cried Mrs. Green, with an injured air, "you know better than that. Haven't I been a sister to you all your life? Say, Joseph!"

"Well, yes, I must say that you have," answered Mr. Bliss. "Considering that your father and mother and my father and mother were the same persons, I don't very well see how you could be otherwise."

"I do declare!" cried Mrs. Green. "You are the most provoking man! I meant that I'd done my duty by you, and you knew what I meant, well enough. Haven't I, Joseph?"

"I suppose you have," answered Mr. Bliss.

"I thought so," exclaimed Mrs. Green, triumphantly. "If you'd only take my advice, and get married, I should feel a great deal better about you than I do now. If you only knew how much more comfortable you'd be, I'm sure you'd try it, Joseph."

"I suppose you give me this advice on the principle that misery loves company, don't you, Serena?" asked Mr. Bliss, rescuing his new hat from one of the little Greens, who was about to convert it into a receptacle for a mud-pie, which it had just brought in.

"I do wish you'd talk sense, Joseph!" exclaimed Mrs. Green. "You know John and I take lots of comfort, and you might, if you'd only think so. You're forty, and it's time you were married, if you ever calculate to be. You need a home of your own—every man does. You've got plenty of money to support yourself and a wife on, and there's the Baxter House that father willed to you—that would make a splendid home for you. You haven't any idea how much nicer it is to have a home of your own to go to, and some one to care for you, and keep your clothes in order. I know a woman that would just suit you, I'm sure."

"I knew it would come to that," cried Mr. Bliss. "I was sure of it. I believe all women are born match-makers."

"Pshaw, Joseph, don't be unreasonable," said Mrs. Green. "I don't want to make a match unless it would be agreeable to both parties, I'm sure; but the woman I spoke of is one that I thought would be most apt to suit you of any one I know. As I was going to say, I might write to her and invite her up here for a week or two. You could make up your mind about whether she'd suit you or not in that length of time, couldn't you?"

"I suppose I could," answered Mr. Bliss, rather grimly. "I tell you what it is, Serena: I don't want any of your foolish young girls that don't know how to do a thing except play the piano and talk French, and what's more, I won't have them so near me."

"She isn't one of that kind," said Serena, triumphantly. "She's as much as thirty, and she don't talk French, nor play."

"An old maid, then," declared Mr. Bliss, savagely.

"Well, yes—rather," admitted Mrs. Green; "but, you know, Joseph, you're getting along in years yourself."

"It's altogether likely I know how old I am," answered Mr. Bliss, testily. These conferences on the marriage question were sure to "use" his temper, he declared, from the very nature of them.

"Don't be so cross, for goodness' sake," said Mrs. Green. "This Miss Patton has quite a handsome property, and I think would suit you first-rate. You'd better let me write and ask her up here for a week or more. Who knows what might happen?"

"Ask her, and her grandmother, and her great-grandmother, for all I care," answered Mr. Bliss, seizing his hat and making his escape from the house.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mrs. Green, "how cross Joseph is getting to be. He needs a wife to get some of them contrary notions out of his head. He's just like all men, I suppose. I'll write to Miss Patton to-day, and have her come down for a few days. I wish—but what she wished remained unspoken, for just here the baby began to cry, and she had to hurry off to the nursery to get it to sleep."

Three days after, Mrs. Green received a letter from Miss Patton, in reply to her pressing invitation for that lady to "come down and make them a good long visit."

"She should be happy to come," she wrote. "She would be at the depot by the nine o'clock train, and would wait there for some one to come and fetch her to the residence of the Greens."

"You'll drive over after her, won't you, Joseph?" said Mrs. Green, as sweetly as she could, and that is why I kept putting favor on poor Mr. Bliss."

"Hanged if I do," answered Mr. Bliss. "How'd I know her from Eve? I never saw her!"

"But you could inquire, couldn't you?" suggested Mrs. Green.

"Of course," answered Mr. Bliss, with withering sarcasm. "Fancy me running up to all the old women inquiring if they were Miss Patton! Not much, Mary Ann."

"But she'll expect some one to bring her up from the depot," said Mrs. Green;

"John can't leave the office, you know, because that Grant case comes off to-day, and he's got to be there. Dear me! I wish I'd never asked her down here," and Mrs. Green began to cry.

"I wish so too, as much as you do, I'll warrant," said Mr. Bliss, very emphatically. "I'll go if you'll stop crying. If there's anything I hate, it's a sniveling woman," he added, to himself. "I'd do any thing to get them to shut up."

Which fact Mrs. Green was well aware of, and did not hesitate to take advantage of when circumstances required that she should do so.

"Thank you," she said, drying her eyes speedily. "I was sure you'd oblige me by doing so."

Nine o'clock saw Mr. Bliss driving down toward the depot in any thing but an amiable frame of mind.

Such fools as women can make of themselves," he soliloquized. "Now here Serena's got this woman to post off down here to stay the Lord knows how long, just to get me to make a fool of myself and marry her. See if I do," he added, giving old Dobbin such a cut with the whip, that that usually sedate animal started off in a sudden trot, and came very near jerking Mr. Bliss out of the buggy, backward, into a mud-puddle.

The train was in when Mr. Bliss reached the depot. There were several women standing on the platform. One of them, from a general aspect of old maidhood, struck him as most likely to be Miss Patton. She wore a pale blue dress, greatly ruffled and flounced, and a white shawl draped in a very careless fashion over very angular shoulders. A very small bonnet, with red roses on it, was adjusted over an elaborate chignon. A big green bow of ribbon was displayed to great advantage at the throat of the blue dress.

"That's her, I'm pretty sure," said Mr. Bliss. "She's exactly as a hedgehog, but she's got a little reproachful feeling—for perhaps she might some day be Mrs. Bliss—who knew?—he added: "but homely folks are always clever, they say."

She wasn't beautiful; no one could ever class Miss Patton among the women of attractive features. Her nose was not very large, and her mouth was about three sizes larger than common mouths; consequently the disproportion was quite noticeable. If it did not add to her attractive appearance, it gave her features a novelty and originality that was something out of the common. Her eyes were a pale, faded blue, and reminded Mr. Bliss of a piece of calico that wouldn't wash.

"Are you Miss Patton?" he ventured to inquire.

"Yes, sir, I am," answered the lady, with a smile, intended to be eminently attractive and reassuring.

"I'm Mrs. Green's brother, Joseph Bliss, and she sent me down after you," said Mr. Bliss, starting off after Dobbin, before the lady had a chance to reply.

He brought Dobbin around, and helped Miss Patton to a seat in the buggy. She had one or two handboxes and a traveling-bag, which he disposed of under the seat, and then climbed in beside her.

"What a glorious day," said Miss Patton, as they started off. "It reminds me of Longfellow's poem, commencing: 'Oh, gift of God! Oh, perfect—'"

"Get up, Dobbin, what're you about?" cried Mr. Bliss, suddenly, giving the horse a tremendous thump with the whip. He hated poetry worse than he did women, and nothing made him so fidgety as to hear people quoting it.

"My goodness!" exclaimed Miss Patton, making frantic efforts to recover something from the bottom of the buggy. "You scared me so, Mr. Bliss."

"What have you lost?" he asked, bending down to assist her in her search.

"Nothing, oh, nothing," answered Miss Patton, hastily.

Mr. Bliss noticed that she spoke in a different manner than when she had spoken before, and looked at her sharply. He thought her mouth had a sort of contracted, collapsed appearance, and was about to ask her what the matter was, when she produced a veil, and proceeded to hide herself behind it.

"What beautiful scenery!" she said, presently.

"Yes, good farming-land," answered Mr. Bliss, who hadn't a particle of romance about him.

He noticed that Miss Patton appeared quite anxious about something, and concluded that that something was in the bottom of the buggy, by the frequent and searching glances she bestowed in that direction. As she did not seem disposed to be communicative about it, he couldn't make any further attempts to assist her in recovering her lost property.

"What charming flowers those are!" remarked Miss Patton, pointing to some yellow asters growing in a corner of the fence. "I do so love flowers! Don't you, Mr. Bliss?"

"I never cared much for them," answered Mr. Bliss.

"I love to read Bryant's beautiful poem on the 'Death of the Flowers,' commencing: 'The melancholy days have come, the saddest of the year; Of waiving winds—'"

Goodness me! Mr. Bliss, how you frighten me!" exclaimed Miss Patton, ending her quotation rather abruptly, for Mr. Bliss had given Dobbin another unmerciful cut with the whip. "I am so nervous," and she clutched him by the arm, in a way intended to be very "taking" and effective. It might have been, under some circumstances, but under the present ones, Mr. Bliss "couldn't" let it in that light.

"There's nothing to get scared at," he said, getting as far away from her as the dimensions of the buggy would allow. "Dobbin's lazy, and has to have a little life put into him once in a while, if you expect him to get up."

"How the birds warble this delicious summer day!" remarked Miss Patton, shortly.

"I think I am something akin to the birds, Mr. Bliss. I love them so. Their sweet songs touch a responsive chord in my soul, and sometimes when I am alone with them, I warble back a little of the music that their songs awaken in my breast. Did you ever feel so, Mr. Bliss?"

"Never," answered Mr. Bliss, very decidedly, inwardly concluding that if she did have any affinity with the bird family, it must be with the magpie species.

"I'm really childlike about some things," went on Miss Patton. "Now, what's that growing in that field? Corn, isn't it?"

"No," answered Mr. Bliss. "That's rye."

"I wish so too, as much as you do, I'll warrant," said Mr. Bliss, very emphatically. "I'll go if you'll stop crying. If there's anything I hate, it's a sniveling woman," he added, to himself. "I'd do any thing to get them to shut up."

Which fact Mrs. Green was well aware of, and did not hesitate to take advantage of when circumstances required that she should do so.

"Thank you," she said, drying her eyes speedily. "I was sure you'd oblige me by doing so."

Nine o'clock saw Mr. Bliss driving down toward the depot in any thing but an amiable frame of mind.

Such fools as women can make of themselves," he soliloquized. "Now here Serena's got this woman to post off down here to stay the Lord knows how long, just to get me to make a fool of myself and marry her. See if I do," he added, giving old Dobbin such a cut with the whip, that that usually sedate animal started off in a sudden trot, and came very near jerking Mr. Bliss out of the buggy, backward, into a mud-puddle.

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THE SATURDAY JOURNAL

Published every Monday morning at nine o'clock.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 5, 1923.

The Saturday Journal is sold by all Newsdealers in the United States and in the Canadian Dominion. Parties unable to obtain it from a newsdealer, or those preferring to have the paper sent direct, by mail, from the publication office, are supplied at the following rates:

Terms to Subscribers:
One copy, four months \$1.00
Two copies, one year 5.00
In all orders for subscriptions be careful to give address in full—State, County and Town. The paper is always shipped, promptly, at expiration of subscription. Subscriptions can start with any date number.

Canadian subscribers will have to pay 50 cents extra, to prepay American postage.
All communications, subscriptions, and letters on business, should be addressed to:
HEADLINE AND ADAMS, Publishers,
100 N. WILSON ST., NEW YORK.

Mr. Albert W. Aiken's Last and Best! ROCKY MOUNTAIN ROB, The Californian Outlaw; OR, THE VIGILANTES OF HUMBURG BAR.

A true story of the Wisdom river diggings, depicting the people and manners of the Rocky Mountain mining region. The terrible Road-agents, whose deeds every now and then send a thrill of horror along the whole line of the Western frontier, play a conspicuous part; the "Heathen Chinee"—wandering woman, cook, bar-keeper and patient toiler after golden grains in mountain gulches forsaken by the Anglo-Saxon, also appears; and last, though not least, Mr. Lo, the poor Indian—Blackfoot chief, poker-player, rum-drinker and scalp-lifter—is drawn to the life. And amid the wild scenes common to mining life of the mountains, runs the charming love story of

Bessie Shook, the Belle of Humburg, and Colombia Mereme, the dark-eyed messenger of vengeance from the sunny plains of la belle France; the woman within whose brain love and hate struggled for supremacy.

AND JOHNNY BIRD, TOO,
"The Gay Young Rooster from Geyser Springs," quick to revenge an affront and prompt to aid the weak, full of quaint sayings, and brimming over with the peculiar humor so common on the frontier, will be a popular favorite.

Strong in plot, terse and sparkling in language, exciting in dramatic situation, this story is destined to create a profound impression.

Our Arm-Chair.

Chat.—A friend says he finds, in a certain medical journal, the following summary of human dissipation: "Out of every 1,000 men, 800 use alcoholic stimulants; 650 use tobacco; 250 use either opium, hashish or morphine; 55 use either arsenic, chloroform or ether; 25 use aphrodisiacs; 230 use chloral hydrate. Out of every 1,000 women, 420 use alcoholic stimulants; 250 use either chloroform, ether or opium; 90 use morphine; 25 use either arsenic, belladonna or chloral hydrate; 350 use valerian"—and asks what we think about it. We think the man who made such a statement is crazy, and that the person who believes it must be greedy for "facts." It is ridiculously untrue. If the writer meant to say any thing approximating to truth, the "one thousand men" might have been qualified as one thousand invalids or patients—the cause of whose afflictions were the poisons named; but, even that statement would not bear the test of proof. The amount of liquor and tobacco consumed of course is very large; but of opium and all its preparations, the number of people addicted to their use is, comparatively, exceedingly small among Americans.

—Humorists do not always wear smiling faces. Josh Billings looks as sober as a Sphinx, and our own Whitehorn and Best Time have a predilection for grave associates. Joe Jot, Jr. is a kind of nondescript; sometimes you'd think he was the father of Benedictine friars, and sometimes the son of Bacchus' oldest paymaster. John G. Saxo is as much a Tontine as a Saxe-on, and like the Saxe-horn, he is a combination of brass and music. But, having removed to Brooklyn "for permanent," he will of course become as serious as the best of them. Tom Hood wrote many of his funniest things when actually racked by pain or amid the distress of poverty, yet the patience of the man was so marvelous that one of his biographers assumes that the lesson taught by his life was that the sense of humor is one of the strongest inducements to submit with a wise and pious patience to the vicissitudes of human existence. This certainly is crediting the "sense of humor" with a new attribute. If, the funnier a man is the more patient he is, under the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune and the evils, it is deeply lamentable that some men and women we know were not funny-born.

—We cry "mercy!" to that class of readers who saw in our notice of a forlorn widow a desire to assist her matrimonially. We thought, at the time, the advertisement which we quoted was a joke, and think so still; but if some forlorn widow, or some sympathetically bachelor, or some rascally youngster bent on fun thinks otherwise, we beg of them to advertise in some Chicago paper for the "widow's" address. We know we agreed to give it, but we hereby withdraw that promise.

A Cup of Good Coffee.—Who knows what a cup of good coffee is? Not one person in ten! The stop served up in homes, hotels, railway eating-houses and restaurants, as the established beverage of the breakfast-table, proves that our people are ignorant of what good coffee is, for, if they really knew the good from the bad, the American is not the person to refrain from such an emphatic expression of his wishes as would compel a compliance with them. This stop is a decoction so strangely compounded that the keenest chemist would fail to trace the constituents. If the people who drink the decoction only knew the tons upon tons of beans, peas, rye, old bread, chickory, dandelion roots, etc., that are daily brewed and ground up into "cof-

fee," they might have some faint conception of the rascality of coffee-dealers and the nature of the solution they are daily pouring into their stomachs to its great detriment, and the permanent injury of the kidneys and liver. It is said, by those who assume to know, that all the ground coffee sold is adulterated from fifteen to fifty per cent with some one or more of the articles named. As in this ground shape detection is impossible, the incentives to greater profits have led "the trade" to regard the adulterated article as a legitimate and proper commodity of traffic, and thus it has become an established practice to deal in what they know is a drugged or deteriorated article of common consumption.

SOMETIMES.

SOMETIMES I wonder if those wealthy persons who talk so much about the poverty of their younger days, and their hard struggles to reach the niche where they now are, would be so prone to brag about it if affairs had turned out differently, and they had remained poor. Would they be as willing to let the world know the state of their pocketbooks? And then, I wonder if they are as willing to aid those who are now as poor as they once were, or will they turn the cold shoulder upon them and say: "Go to work, as I did, and you will be as fortunate as I." I don't say they really do talk and act so; I only wonder if such is the case.

Sometimes I think persons tell a great number of white lies—unintentionally, I grant you—because I've known them to send an applicant for work away, saying at the same time: "I will keep you in mind, and if I can possibly find any employment for you, be assured you shall hear from me," when the next moment the whole affair will slip from their memory, never to find a place there again, until the next seeker applies, to have the same white lie told him. It is very wrong to encourage hopes which you never mean to fulfill. To take enough interest in each other's welfare, to see if we cannot be of some service, is really a great help and kindness; but when I see these men of means sitting in their easy-chairs, puffing away at an expensive cigar, regarding the hundreds of human beings, who go shivering by, and who seldom get a kind word, much less a helping hand, I feel as though I'd like to say something strong to them, because you see I was brought up with the heathenish idea that I ought to help those less fortunate than I, and not to send them away with a lie upon my lips, and the Lawless nature is such that I haven't forgotten it yet.

Sometimes I wonder if we are aware of the many harsh and fretful words we use in our intercourse with those about us, and if we should like to be treated in the same way ourselves. We speak cross to the people who work for us, and don't think it quite so pleasant if the tables are turned, and we find others complaining at what we have done. Yes, we love to tyrannize over one another, and point out faults, because, you know, we never have any!

Sometimes how naughty we grow, and "let our angry passions rise," when the hymn-book tells us we ought not to do any thing of the kind, and act just as foolishly as I did, when I was a school-girl, which wasn't quite a thousand years ago. The teacher would insist that I could draw maps, and I was headstrong enough to consider that when impossibilities became possibilities, then could I draw maps, but not *un-til* then. Well, he kept me half an hour after school, to pay me for my stubbornness, and I just vowed all sorts of theatrical vengeance against him; hoping that he'd find hairs in every pen he wrote with—that his paper would be full of crumps, and that flies would find an untimely grave in his ink-bottles. I was never going to forgive him; no, *never!* But when I went to the funeral of his dear little babe, and saw him shed tears over that little waxen face, so cold in death, and kiss those dear little lips that would never prattle more, I knew he was not heartless, and I never tried to vex him again. Were it not that death visits us, I do verily believe we'd never forgive some of those around us, or give over, for a time, our frivolity and thoughtlessness.

I sometimes think that many of us girls fall in the estimation of those more sober-minded, because we are so full of the spirit of fun; but then, it is our nature, and if God has so formed us, why should we wish to alter his work?

Because we are lively, do not think us heartless—we can weep and feel keenly the sorrows when they do come; but until then do not crush out our spirits by compelling us to practice a self-denial that is wholly unnatural. I'd rather see the face of a bright angel, carved on a tombstone, because it tells of purer lives beyond the clouds, than witness the old style of a death's head and cross-bones, because that would seem to imply that such an end was horrible, and that there was no hereafter of pleasantness and peace.

Then, sometimes, I think that it is this looking forward to the reunion of our friends in the heavenly land which makes us bear up more bravely. Haven't you thought the same thing sometimes?

EVE LAWLESS.

Foolscap Papers.

Getting A Photograph.

THE artist asked me if I wanted a full-faced picture. I told him that was just what I wanted as my cheeks were getting rather thin, and if it was possible, and wouldn't cost too much, I said I would like to have it taken to look just as I did when I was twenty-five, with clustering curls overshadowing my noble brow, in place of this heavy absence of hair which now numbers it.

I wanted the photograph pretty large, on the scale of a mile and a half to the inch, and wished him to be very particular in taking my teeth, which were just from the shop.

I sat down and arranged myself in a classical attitude. My carpet-sack, which was arranged for light traveling (that is, with nothing in it but a tooth-brush), reposed gracefully at my feet (I asked him if he would take my feet; he said he would, and I told him he might have them, bunions and all). My gingham umbrella was under my arm, and my coat buttoned up to the neck to save my shirt (it was the only one I had, and I didn't want him to take that). I had waited for it a good while and was proud of it.

I told him I wanted the picture taken so

it would show all sides of me, and people could walk around me. I didn't want only half a picture, and if any thing was to be left out to let it be the rheumatism; and, as I am a little hard of hearing, he might be careful and not get any deafness in the picture.

He then turned his "chameleon obscurer" upon me.

I was getting frightened and thought he might have some murderous designs of blowing me to pieces.

I begged him to give me chloroform or laughing-gas, and said I would much rather he would.

But he told me to sit quietly now, and keep my eyes on the camera and I would see a little bird fly out, and not speak, for he couldn't take my word.

"Steady, now," said he, removing the cloth and turning his back to me; but I couldn't see any little bird coming out, very fast, and thought the artist was a humbug, and changed myself into an easier position.

By turning around so both sides of me should be represented in the picture, and went to making chalk-marks on the screen.

Then he said, "All right," and shut up the machine, and said I was a blamed fool, and a variety of other things.

I jumped up and asked him by what rule in arithmetic he ciphered that conclusion out, and felt on the instant that I would have to crash his head down his throat and let him die of strangulation.

He said, by moving I had spoiled my picture. I told him to use a little more Etiquette Book to me, or I would spoil his.

He tried it again and told me to sit still this time, and not even move my ears, nor laugh in my sleeve. I asked him if I was allowed to think. He rung a little bell and I sat very quietly, and moved as little as I could in removing my right boot which was very tender.

I told him all right and turned round to shut up the machine, and suddenly said,

"Thunder! Why, man, I don't believe I can ever get to take a picture of you unless you sit in somebody's lap, or put on a strait-jacket."

I told him that I never was known to sit still unless I had a good deal of work to do, and then I always overdid it, and asked if he wouldn't let me get behind a screen when he went to take my picture again.

He replied that I would make a better picture that way than if I was in front of it.

At last he gave me some soothing syrup, got a dead set on me, and promised that he would give me a stick of candy if I wouldn't move, which I didn't, except to put my foot down on a mouse which came out and went to nibbling my boot; then he closed the box and said he had me in there now, and to tell the truth, it is the best bird's-eye view of myself I ever saw. Talk about the Venus de Medici, the Goloshes of Roths, or Samuel Patch; they ain't anywhere! As the artist said, he could take any thing.

I let him take my note!

WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

Woman's World.

That hateful Sunbonnet.—Some hints of coming fashions for Bonnets, Dresses, etc.—Fitness and usefulness in matters of dress. Away with the Sunbonnet!

GENTLE readers of the WOMAN'S WORLD, you upon whose brows wrinkles, instead of sunny curls, begin to encroach, tell me, did you ever wear an old-fashioned sunbonnet? I did when I was a little girl, and I hated my bonnet. Didn't you hate yours? Didn't you envy your brothers the possession of their straw hats in summer and their cloth or fur caps in winter?

And do you not now rejoice, dear matrons, that the reign of the sunbonnet and the unsightly, flat-topped hat and the gaudy *calèche* is over? If you don't, I know your little girls do; or would, if they had ever been forced ever so lovingly, as I was by my tenderest of mothers, to wear a hateful sunbonnet, or any other monstrosity in vogue about the time I was a little girl.

We are all advocates of progression in matters of dress. We all like new fashions and new garments; but there is as much false progression in dress as in some other matters. We progressed too fast and too far in the bonnet business when we stocked those little bits of straw, or gauze, or velvet and ribbon, and lace on our heads, in front of our balloon-like chignons; or wore those little loves of hats, that looked like soup-plates tilting over on our noses, and hiding our foreheads, that were in fashion about three years ago. We are doing much better in bonnet and hat progression now. The hats of this winter are veritable hats, which cover the whole top of the head. The bonnets, too, are almost bonnets. By another season, or by next fall at furthest, we may hope to see that most becoming of all bonnets that a woman wore, the cottage, revived. That bonnet which you and I, and all ladies of good taste preferred, when we were girls; but may we never again be forced to sit in the shade of a sunbonnet or dunstable, a poke-bonnet or a *calèche*!

Yes, we may well say, Heaven bless this day of pretty cheap hats and bonnets! "I am wearing a bonnet," cries the astonished city belle or country belle, as the case may be, who never orders one save from an establishment that charges from twenty to fifty dollars for that prime necessity of a woman's outfit. Yes, I reiterate it: bless this day of cheap hats and bonnets! for cheap and beautiful hats and bonnets can be purchased, and those which are in good taste and of excellent materials, provided one knows how to shop, and where to go for them, in the "great variety fair," called New York.

I am wearing a bonnet of a bonnet that cost only nine dollars, and my daughter wears a six-dollar hat, and if we were fashionable abbess, and said, with unblushing sang froid, that they came from "Mme. Florio's," of Fifth avenue, instead of telling the truth and saying "We got them on Eighth avenue," everybody would believe us, and declare they were *exquisite*. Now "everybody" don't know, indeed very few do know, that these Eighth avenue hats are trimmed by the very same "girls" that trim "Mme. Florio's." The Mme.'s establishment closes at five in the afternoon. Her "girls" go immediately to their cheap dinners, and then over on Eighth avenue for a night job. They get it, take it home, or to the wretched room they call home, trim it, if it is a hat or bonnet, and return it the next morning before they go to "Mme. Florio's," which opens at nine, and where they are due at half-past eight, a. m. Some of these girls, by the way, are on the "heavenly side" of forty; but they never cease to be "girls."

Fitness is the perfection of taste in dress.

At a grand ball or reception, held in such a spacious apartment as the Academy of Music in this city, court-trains of velvet and shimmering silk and satin, floating away three yards in length behind the wearer; and diamond parures, and nodding plumes, flecked with quivering and flashing gems, may look in place; but, for an assembly or party in the country or village, even where fortunes are counted sometimes by millions as well as by thousands, such dressing would be as inappropriate as a hat or bonnet costing fifty or seventy-five dollars would in the village church. As the few only and not the majority could appear in such costumes, and as the entertainers of such magnificently arrayed guests might be forced to the uncomfortable thought, that one yard of the lace on the dress of one of their guests, or a single ornament in her hair, probably cost more than their whole entertainment, the *unfitness* must force itself on the most obtuse.

If you have an ample fortune, and have the good fortune to hold your possessions in the country, you can aid your neighbors to dress fashionably and elegantly by modeling your own dresses and giving them the benefit of "seeing how it is done." You need not make all your dresses of the costliest materials; it would be best to have only a few very costly dresses. Cheap fabrics, made up neatly and elegantly in the prevailing mode, would answer the purpose and make your friends feel that their means were not so painfully less than yours. With a "catalogue of fashions" in your possession, and the means at your command, what tasteful and beautiful models you could give your neighbors for their own inexpensive garments.

What would that patient and gentle mother, who used to tie on my hated sunbonnet, have given for such facilities as we now have at our command for fashioning and making our little ones' clothes. No more fitting and refitting since the graded paper patterns have come into use. Measures taken around the waist and bust, and one "try on," and the garment is fitted. Into the devouring jaws of the sewing machine passes the ruffles and flounces, the long skirt seams, and hems and fells and bindings, and the garment is "turned out" with an exactness, a stamp of perfection upon it, unknown in former years, and in less than one-fifth of the time it used to take to make such a bewildering wonder as an elaborately-trimmed costume. Indeed, it was impossible to make such complicated wonders in the way of *plissee* flounced and *bouffanted*, and other trimmed garments as we now wear, and make with so much ease.

And as for hats and bonnets. Away with the sunbonnet! when we can get our little girls sailor straw hats, banded with pretty ribbons for summer wear, and felt ones for winter, each at a cost of less than two dollars. Yes, away with the hated sunbonnet forever!

EMILY VERDERY.

Short Stories from History.

Old Legends of the New World.—The existence of a world in the West had been suspected long before the discovery of America. We may put aside the legend of the great island Atlantis which Plato heard from the Egyptian priests, and with which, in later times, were incorporated all the fantastic stories which were brought home by the first travelers among the negro tribes; but one or two of the stories which floated about in old times are curious enough to be still worthy of notice.

An ancient German chief was reported to have sent as a choice present to the consul Metellus certain Indians, who, losing their course, and being battered up and down with contrary winds, were shipwrecked in the North Sea, and taken alive. Some commentators will have it that these were some of our own British ancestors so be-painted and disguised with wood as to be mistaken for Eastern savages. However this may be, the story reminds us of another, told in modern times by Bembo, the Venetian historian, with reference to the then recent discoveries of Columbus.

A French ship, sailing in the Narrow Seas, is said to have picked up a canoe built of osiers and bark; in this were seven swarthy men, whose faces were peculiarly broad, and tattooed, or stained, with a violet color; their dress was of fishes' skins; and their crowns were woven of reeds, and twisted in the shape of ears. "Flesh they ate raw, and they drank blood like wine." Six of them soon died; but the survivor is said to have lived for a long time in the retinue of the French king.

Mr. Aiken's New Romance!

We shall, in next week's number, give the opening chapters of

ROCKY MOUNTAIN ROB, THE CALIFORNIA OUTLAW,

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

Author of "Overland Kit," "Wolf Demon," "White Witch," "A Strange Girl," etc., etc.,

in which the readers of romance will be given a rare treat, indeed. Reviving several of the characters made notable in his "Overland Kit," and again bringing forward the hero of the steel fists, Jim York, who appeared to such advantage in "The White Witch," the Actor-Author has given us in addition,

The Beautiful Fortune-Teller of the Gulch—

Bob Shook, the Daring Express Rider—

The Gay Young Rooster of the Geysers—

Old Shook, of the Water-proof Saloon—

"Rackensack" and His Chums—

each and all of whom are novelties in story and oddities in drama. Its locale being the Mining Gulches of the Wisdom River Region, it all reads so like a transcript of its wild, reckless, exciting and singular life that, as in "Overland Kit," we seem to be dealing with veritable men and veracious events. Overland Kit is again merged in Dick Talbot, the Gamester, and he, in some mysterious way, seems linked with the

DREADED BANDIT AND ROAD-AGENT,

whose robberies fill all the mining region with the wildest tales of his deeds—half-chivalrous, half-unprincipled violence. Upon his track is one who, seemingly only a boy in years, assumes the role of a Venger, and in strange disguises haunts the haunts of his enemy, eager for his blood, yet, who is not even master of the great passion which leads to results very strange indeed. The whole story is fired with and pervaded by

A SPIRIT OF DARING AND UNREST,

which renders its perusal an incessant source of excitement and surprise. It is well worthy of its author's name and fame, and adds another brilliant to the long list of masterpieces of American romance which it has been our great pleasure to introduce.

Readers and Contributors.

To CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. preserved for future orders.—Unavailable MSS. promptly returned only where stamps accompany the inclosure, for such return.—No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MSS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not read or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of MS.; as copy 7, third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note size paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, leaving off each page as it is written, and carefully giving it its full or page number.—A rejection by no means implies want of merit. Many MSS. unsuitable to us are well worthy of use.—All experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Correspondents must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

We shall have to decline the following, viz.: "A Miller's Story," "The Doomed Scout," "A Vision of Hell," "Saved by a Song," "At Last," "Sowing and Reaping," "The Farewell," "The Cruise for Icebergs," "A Hot Day in December," "Lizzie Little's Man," "My Boy John," "Mrs. Homer's Guest," "The Battle of Eyes," "A Belle's Beat," "Miss Herbert's Conquest," "Disgraced with Himself," "Peter's Protege," "The Deacon's Subterfuge," "Mrs. Lampton's Last Party," "Big Back," "A Gallant Woman," "Why Don't He Go?" "There is no Rest."

C. B. The MSS. were not returned because you failed to send the requisite stamps.

Mrs. I. J. We can not write on the subject mentioned. Go to some good trusty male friend for advice—say your minister.

P. F. We can not answer the exact date when the serial referred to will commence. It is "on the schedule."

MARK WILSON. Please hold back any further contributions until we decide on those now in hand.

C. G. G. The word *Telegram* is a very proper one and ought to be generally adopted. To say telegraphic dispatch or message is correct enough, but telegram is more terse. We know some professed "purists" in language resist its adoption, but it is both analogically and orthographically correct, and will prevail. "Worcester" gives it a hearty endorsement and "Webster" accepts it, so use it.

ELLEN E. It is not true that the regulations regarding taking up land under the Homestead Laws have been changed. A person after having made one location under these laws can not "sell out" and take up another claim.

B. B. The English "Blue Book" and Austrian "Red Book" are simply the Official Records of the Government transactions for the year named.

ARTHUR SKEAN. Your query has cost us some trouble to answer, but here it is: there were enlisted during the late War for the Union, in the Federal Government service, 2,550,553 men—every re-enlistment counting as an enlistment. Of this number about 96,000 were killed; 15,000 died of disease or wounds, and over 30,000 who lived were disabled or permanently injured. It is not a "profession" frequently given that one million of our citizens perished in the war is greatly exaggerated.

BARTON G. H. We know Mr. Watson claims to have been the original author of the poem of "Beautiful Snow," and the editors of *Harper's Weekly* say he did write the poem for them, and when they say a thing, you know, that settles it. The late Major Johnston never could have written it. It wasn't him.

T. E. C. We know nothing of the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy. Write to some friend in that city, or write to the Secretary of the New York College of Physicians and Surgeons for one of its Catalogues. No "diploma" is necessary to enter the "profession of drugists." It is not a "profession," in the proper sense. It is a business, open for any one to undertake.

MATT ENDREX. Drop into any drug-store and consult the Pharmacopoeia, and you will find that Macclure is simply dissolved gum arabic or gum tragacanth.

P. S. W. See Webster's or Worcester's Unabridged Dictionary for the pronunciation of all proper names most used in literature and mythology.

WASHINGTON GREENHORN. The story referred to is not on our list.—Frost-bitten feet will always bother you. Humankind by wearing wearing easy shoes and don't get them frost-bitten again.

HARRY LOVELAND. We know nothing of the firm indicated.

All correspondents who write, asking what we think of their handwriting, are informed that each one writes better than the other, and that the others will have to do something else than write for a living. This is our irrepressible difference of opinion.

ANXIOUS. Of course we, in common with all editors, read any M.—that promises to be good, no matter where it comes from. Length has no more to do with excellence than color of the paper. Judging from your questions we should say you were decidedly a novice. Ask your postmaster questions about postage.

ELLEN S. We do not "club" with other papers, nor offer three dollars' worth of "chromos" to every new subscriber. We give you a paper richly worth the three dollars per year demanded for it. Those journals who do find it necessary to sandwich their paper with cheap chromos, or cheap jewelry, or dearest-at-price prices, must need subscribers amazingly to make off with their paper, or their trouble. So, take what they say with a big grain of allowance.

NETTIE G. If it is becoming to your style, we would advise you to wear your hair dressed high off your neck, for it is decidedly much more *dignified*.

WILLIAM PENN. Your school-teacher should have taught you that the Seven Wonders of the World are: 1st, The Colossus of Rhodes; 2d, The Temple of Diana at Ephesus; 3d, The Mausoleum of King Mausolus of Caria; 4th, The Statue of Jupiter Olympus; 5th, The Walls of Babylon; 6th, The Pyramids of Egypt; 7th, The Palace of Cyrus, King of the Medes.

BILL-FINGER. For ordinary street wear we would advise gentlemen to appear in dark kid gloves and dark ties, they being much more *gentle* than any thing shawty. Notting looks more poverty-stricken than ungloved hands in cold weather.

Unanswered questions on hand will appear next week.

CUPID'S AUCTION SALE.

BY ARNOLD REIER.

Going! Going! Going! Gone!
A sweet merry maiden of twenty-one;
With a voice as clear as a nightingale;
Who would not buy at an auction sale,
When maidens so nice,
And exceedingly wise,
Can be bought at such a low price?

Going! Going! By jingo she's mine!
That toothless old maid of forty-nine!
Sure, pleasant will be the rest of my life,
If she but turns out to be a good wife;
What if she don't? Then
The wrinkle-faced hen,
Won't find me one of the mildest of men.

Going! Going! Going! Sold!
A shy young widow who knows how to scold;
(Faith, but I see plenty of troubles and woes,
If he lives with her till from earth she goes;
But I don't think he will.)
For she's some on the kill,
And has already hurried two over the hill.)

Going! Going! Going! Come! who buys
This fair little maiden with laughing eyes,
And lips as sweet as the flowers of May,
Johnny! give me a bid. Come, what do you say,
Shall I sell her or not?
She will brighten your lot,
And bring love and happiness into your cot.

Sold at last! I the fairest of girls,
With rosy cheeks and auburn curls;
Sold out at last! Oh, who would fail,
To attend "Cupid's Auction Sale"?

A Man's Forgiveness.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

Up in the fast darkening, purple sky the silver stars were peeping out, and Inez Carlyn stood very still on the high veranda that commanded a view of the moonlighted landscape for miles.

But she was not thinking of what was before her; nor was Alf Vandeleur, as he leaned over the light iron railing, and moodily listened to the murmurous plashing of the fill that flowed along beneath them.

Almost abruptly he turned toward Inez, with an eager earnestness that made her start.

"Inez, I want an answer! You must tell me, once for all, yes or no. Inez, do you care for me—just the least?"

His tone had suddenly changed from impatient impetuosity to pleading tenderness, and his fine face and grand, dark eyes lighted up with a radiance that told how much depended on this girl's answer.

She was a quiet, restful woman, whose calm, deliberate movements contrasted almost strangely with her nervousness; a blue-eyed, golden-haired girl, who had woven the meshes of her sweet attentions around Alf Vandeleur, until now, on this bright October night, only four months from the hour he had seen her first, he was giving her his love and asking hers in return.

As he spoke, Inez turned her cold, haughty face toward him. Cold and haughty her classic face always was, so that in its impassive lines, Alf Vandeleur was too blind to read the doom it held for him.

"It was a doom she held in store for him, for he had laid his axe at her feet."

"Why, Mr. Vandeleur, surely you have not dreamed that my answer could be other than no?"

He suddenly grasped her wrists in his strong hands.

"What is it to you? How dare you ask me such a question?"

"Oh," he retorted, "I merely thought you might trifle with Mr. Carrol as well as me. That is all."

He was looking steadily at her—at that face he so worshipped, so often dreamed would one day be all his own; and he saw how the blue eyes fairly scintillated with anger, as she replied:

"Mr. Vandeleur—and her voice was low, concentrated, intense in its sweet cadences—"if you will tell me wherein I have trifled with you, I will tell you what I intend to do regarding Mr. Carrol."

"Then you have intentions respecting him? I beg pardon, Miss Carlyn; I had not given you credit for any."

He was so icy, so bitterly sarcastic; and she felt her own steel reposed giving way before the sudden, unnatural indifference of this lover of hers, until this hour, she had led on—and knew she had led on, with a chain of roses.

She watched him covertly, as he leaned in graceful carelessness against the white, ivy-wreathed pillar. She saw a calm, handsome exterior; but of the awful battle raging in his soul, that her fair hands had incited, whose signal for the deadly fray her lips had given, she little dreamed. But she did wonder, as she watched him, with a little sigh she would have died rather than had him hear, if, after all, she had done wisely in rejecting Alf Vandeleur, and accepting Harry Carrol?

"Carrol?"

As Mr. Vandeleur spoke his companion's name, he deliberately removed his cigar from between his lips, and held it poised between thumb and finger. There was an odd smile on his mouth, that had been there since the evening, now a fortnight ago, that Inez Carlyn and he had had such an unvarnished conversation.

Harry Carrol stood just inside the window, watching a group of ladies who had congregated near the end of the hotel stoop. One of them, and the brightest, prettiest, and most radiant, was Inez, who, occasionally, raised her witching eyes to her lover.

"Carrol?"

Vandeleur was obliged to repeat the name; and then Harry turned his head

from the window to the easy-chair that held half of Alf Vandeleur—the other half of him being accommodated by a gay velvet camp-chair.

"Well, Alfred—say it."

"I am not so sure that I ought to say it, after all, old fellow. But I would like to know if you are going to marry Miss Carlyn?"

He watched Harry narrowly, and saw a joyous light kindle in his eyes as Harry involuntarily, it seemed, looked down again on his betrothed's queenly form and beautiful face.

"Harry? there's nothing in the world that shall prevent it! Alf, old boy, isn't she a jewel? Wouldn't you give all you're worth to stand in my shoes—oh?"

A little frown contracted Vandeleur's forehead; other than it, he gave no sign.

"Well, that depends," he returned, oracularly. "I suppose if Miss Carlyn adored me as she adores you, I should have considered myself a very happy man. As affairs really exist, I regard myself a disappointed man, and at the same time a fortunate one."

And then he took lazy puffs at his fragrant cigar, waiting for the burst of astonishment he knew would come.

"You talk in riddles, Alf. Why, in connection with Miss Carlyn, do you consider yourself a fortunately-disappointed individual?"

"Simply because when I proposed to her last Wednesday two weeks, she coolly told me she had been engaged to you while she was trifling with me, Carrol."

Alf jumped up from his seat with a white face that betrayed more emphatically than his words had done how severe the blow had been.

Carrol's lips curled haughtily, and his tones were colder and harder than Alf had heard them.

"And you, considering yourself a gentleman, come and repeat this matter to Miss Carlyn's betrothed husband?"

Harry walked up to Alf's side very excitedly, and went on, in his impulsive way:

"Because I am the lucky man, and Miss Inez—nonsense, Alf; what a fool I am! I can't afford to lose you, my old friend, if you do provoke me. But seriously, what did she do, Alf?"

Harry's better nature was asserting itself, and he laid his hand on Vandeleur's shoulder most unkindly.

"Harry," said Alf, "not for all the world would I stand between you and your happiness; nor is it that I am jealous of your 'better luck'—you think it so—that I mentioned Miss Carlyn to you. But I, who a month ago loved that woman to distraction—I tell you to-night that she has done me a favor in refusing me. I can see it now, Harry, that the woman who would knowingly try to win one man's heart when she is bound to another, is not the woman I want for my wife; besides, my friend, by the way she glories over my defeat, I know her to be cruel and unrefined."

Harry stood listening earnestly. When Alf had concluded, there was a red glow on his cheeks.

"You have said some tough things, Alf, but I cannot help seeing your logic. Only, had any other man said them, I'd have pushed his head down his throat. As it is—Jove! Alf, I worship that girl!"

"Mayhap your eyes will be opened suddenly, as mine were," responded he, dryly, as he tossed away his cigar and walked out of the room.

"Or else," soliloquized Harry, "you are the most deceitful jealous-minded man I ever knew; or else—and that is a sheer impossibility—I am in love with a flirt who is not worthy any man's honest affections. *Quien sabe?*"

"Have I done wisely, I wonder?" Inez Carlyn made a perfect picture as she leaned in gracefully comfortable abandon among the linen cushions of the bamboo lounge. She had that morning worn a delicate green chamber dress, with narrow ruffles trimming the skirts and body. It was remarkably becoming to her, especially with the narrow brilliant pink scarf under the filmy lace collar, and the tiny fringed bow to match, that nestled in the crepe folds of her hair.

No one would have dreamed that Inez Carlyn was mentally discussing the most important subject that can enter a woman's head to discuss, or her heart to negotiate. No one would have thought—not even Harry Carrol, had he then come in and found her idly twisting his ring around her pretty finger, or Alf Vandeleur, of whom she was earnestly thinking—that it was of them both, and of her betrothal, and of her marriage she was reflecting.

Yes, Inez Carlyn was actually asking of her heart the question—had she done well in refusing Alf Vandeleur? She had loved him from the first, and that moonshiny night, when he had pleaded with her, it was as much as she could do to so coldly, indifferently, refuse him. To be sure, she had what she considered plausible reasons for promising Harry Carrol to be his wife—and the reason here been that Harry Carrol was richer, by thousands, than Alf Vandeleur; and Harry never had for a moment dreamed it was his money, and not him, that had won her.

But now, when the novelty of her engagement with Harry was over, and she had become accustomed to being regarded by him as his own, Inez slowly awakened to the undeniable fact that he, and the honest love he gave her, did not and never could satisfy her, added though it was to the wealth she had always thought would make her superlatively happy.

For Inez Carlyn, despite her faults, was a woman of intelligence co-equal to her beauty; and if she was weak on some points, she was not wholly unprincipled, as witness her meditations, that were so earnest, of her lover, and Alf Vandeleur.

And now, when she had deliberately asked herself if she had done well in promising Harry Carrol, she as deliberately answered the self-put question:

"She had not done well."

Ever prompt, decisive—and yet terribly impulsive—and it was this curious combination of characteristics that made her Inez Carlyn, and nobody else, she at once took off the gold band from her finger, and placed it in the morocco nest; then she hastily wrote a note to Harry Carrol:

"Very suddenly it has come to me that it is best for our engagement to cease. I am convinced that neither of us will regret this a year hence. I. C."

She did not even read it once, but sealed it in a small square monogrammed envelope, and rung for the servant to deliver it and the tiny package at Mr. Carrol's door.

After that she locked her door, and for

an hour walked restlessly to and fro in her room, and then drew her writing-desk to her lap again.

This time, as she wrote, her cheeks paled and flushed, and little irregularities in the usually faultless lines of beauty showed when and where her fingers had trembled with the burden of nervous anxiety; and then, when the half-hour had been charged to carry it personally to Mr. Vandeleur, Inez Carlyn, the proud, the peerless, who had not scrupled to trample on two men's hearts, covered down in her chair, to await, with madly-throbbing heart, her destiny.

In his room Alf Vandeleur had read Inez Carlyn's note, that lay still open before him; that he and Harry Carrol had read; one with pale face and quivering lips, the other with a quiet calmness, that denoted the perfect victory he had gained over the love that so late had run rampant over his heart.

This was her appeal to him:

"Mr. Vandeleur, I have given up the one who unconsciously came between us. I did not know then, but I know now how wrong I was. Will you forgive what I said that night? Will you forget it? Will you be merciful, and let me tell you again I mean far differently?"

It needed no name at its close, nor had it any.

And on the reverse side of the paper (oh, cruellest, most cutting thing to do under any except business circumstances!) Alf wrote, in lead-pencil:

"I forgive and forget—Inez Carlyn."

"Is it not better so, Harry?" he said, after the sable messenger of Cupid had wonderingly taken the third note, and grinningly pocketed the third ten-cent stamp.

As she says—in a year it will make no difference," returned Harry; but his eyes were full of pain.

"Come, come, old fellow! don't give up! Let's pack our portmanteaus, and off for Sharon Springs, by the noon train, eh? A change of air will work miracles. Besides it will be kinder to her."

And all that day in her room, Inez Carlyn cried over that cold, cruel line that told her, for her thoughtless conduct, even when redeemed by repentance, she was forgotten and avenged.

A Strange Girl:
A NEW ENGLAND LOVE STORY.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

AUTHOR OF "THE WOLF DEMON," "OVERLAND KIT," "RED MAXWELL," "AGE OF SPADES," "HEART OF FIRE," "WITCHES OF NEW YORK," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXI.

DOWN THE RAPPAHANNOCK.

THE old man bowed his head in his hands and groaned aloud; the remembrance of the fatal night when he had yielded to temptation and bartered his soul for gold, was as fresh in his memory as if it had been but yesterday.

Delia did not speak; she rested her head upon her father's knee, and the great tears came slowly into the sharp blue eyes.

At length the old man went on with his confession:

"The night was very dark; there wasn't a star to be seen in the sky, and no moon. Led by little Delia, she faded into the gloom, until at last a great black cloud seemed to settle right down onto us. The snuck was a heaving up an' down, tugging at the anchor just as if it was a living thing in a hurry to get off. The tide had turned about half-past five, and the flood-tide was setting in strong from the bay. I had arranged with my passenger that he was to give me a signal from the p'int, and then I was to pull to the beach in the skiff and take him on board. I was to signal to him with my lantern in return, so that he should know that it was all right, and that I was coming. So, Jethro an' I sat on the snuck an' waited. Jethro noticed that I seemed out of sorts, an' asked me if I wasn't sick. I never knew how hard it was to lie, till then. Of course he didn't know any thing of what was coming. I told him that I was waiting a message from the shore which I expected would come about twelve, an' then we'd up anchor an' put. Finally, Jethro said he was sleepy, so he crawled into the cabin an' laid down. An' I sat there all alone; I could hear Jethro snoring away like a steam engine, an' all the while the waves as they came in the side of the snuck, the wind had freshened up an' it was blowing pretty stiff; the snuck was pitching up an' down, an' it looked as if there was a chance of having a pretty smart blow."

"At last half-past eleven came. I woke Jethro up an' got the lantern all ready to give the signal. The hours that I had waited while Jethro was curled up in the cabin asleep had seemed pretty long, but that little half-hour up to twelve o'clock seemed 'bout as long as all the rest put together."

"The last time I looked at my watch it wanted just a minute to twelve. Jethro was at the anchor, all ready to haul up at the word, an' I had the lantern kivered up in a piece of sail, to give the signal."

"I had hardly got my watch back to my pocket when I saw the light on the p'int giving the signal. I was to show my light twice in answer."

"Wal, I answered the signal, an' jest as I flashed the light a second time over the water, up went a rocket right back of the p'int. You see, Delie, I had arranged with the Confederate colonel that the same signal which told my passenger all was right, was also a signal for the soldiers to go for him."

"The moment I saw the rocket shoot up in the air, I yelled to Jethro that there was something wrong, an' for to take up anchor an' let her slip."

"The ebb-tide had set in strong an' the stream was a-jest rushing down the bay. No sooner had the anchor left the bottom than the snuck slid along with the tide. I up with the sail as soon as I could. An' jest as I got her half-way up, there come two shots from the p'int, an' then a whole volley of musketry. When I heard it, it made my blood run cold, an' I almost let the sail go right slap back to the deck, but, somehow, I managed to hold on."

"I got the sails up an' headed the snuck down the river. There wasn't a sound from the shore after the musketry, an' the first thing I knew I caught myself praying that my passenger had escaped, though I was fearful that he hadn't."

"I headed the snuck straight for the bay. 'Twas 'bout four o'clock in the morning, I reckon, when I got down near the mouth of the river, an' there, right ahead of me, an-

chored in the stream, was a Federal gun-boat, right off Windmill P'int."

I saw at once that 'twas no use trying to steal past, for it was gittin' lighter, and lighter every minute; so I jest run in behind a wooded p'int in a little cove that there was there, an' made up my mind to lay hid until the gunboat got out of the way. I run the snuck in close to shore, an' then, as I hadn't had a wink of sleep, I crawled into the cabin an' laid down. But, Delie, I might jest as well laid awake, for all the good that sleep did me. I dreamed every thing all over ag'in, an' more too, for in my dream I went on shore an' saw the fight there between my passenger and the sogers. I saw him go down, shot to pieces by the musketry, an' saw the red blood a-streaming all over his pale face. I tried to run away, but I couldn't run; the airth seemed to give way right under my steps, so that I couldn't get ahead any."

"I s'pose I slept in this horrible way for 'bout four hours, when Jethro put his head into the cabin an' called me."

"Cap'n," says he, 'here's somethin' awful out here!'

"I got up an' crawled out, an' there, floating down on the tide, in a pile of drift-wood, was the dead body of my passenger. Oh, Delie! I kin see it now jest as plain as I did then. He was floating on his back, and his white face, with a little red wound in his temple, was turned up to the sky. I jest looked at it a min'te an' then I went over in a fit. When I come to myself, Jethro was a-bending over me an' pouring whisky down my throat. The dreadful thing had gone on with the tide."

"Jethro said that I had raved like all possessed, an' I saw that he hadn't any idea that it was through me that the man had been killed."

"The gunboat went up the stream in the afternoon, an' jest as soon as it commenced to get dark, I up sail and ran across the bay. There was a little village on the western shore of Maryland where I had been used to make a landing, an' I run straight for it jest as if I was a-going to land my cargo there. You see, Delie, it was necessary to get rid of Jethro, 'cos if I sailed straight for New York, as I intended to do, he would had a suspicion that there was somethin' wrong. It was 'bout three in the morning when we ran in to the Maryland shore. I told Jethro that he had better get into the skiff an' pull in to the beach for to see if every thing was all right. I pretended to be afraid that there might be some of the Federal soldiers there. He knew exactly where to go, for the Confederate agent lived close to the beach."

"An' as soon, Delie, as he was fairly out of sight, hid in the gloom, I up sail and scooted down the bay. I knew that Jethro would nat'rally think that I had been frightened off by some gunboat."

"I sailed straight for New York, an' here I smuggled the trunk an' boxes on shore without any one having any suspicions of how valuable a cargo I had on board the Nancy Jane. Jest as I thought, the boxes were full of gold, and the trunk had a large lot of greenbacks and Government bonds in it. Altogether, there was a little over eighty-one thousand dollars. I sold the gold and the bonds little by little, an' I came back to Biddeford a rich man. But, since that night when I saw the rocket go up an' heard the report of the muskets, I hadn't had a min'te's peace. I dream the whole thing over an' over every time I go to sleep, an' to-night, Delie, as I came out of Deacon Paxton's house, I saw this dead Mr. Dallis rise up out of the airth. I know what it means. I ain't got long to live. He comes for me clean out of the salt ocean," and the old man moaned pitifully.

"No, no, father, that is not possible," the daughter said, gently; "the dead can not return."

"And the deacon, too, said that I would roast in hell fire for what I've done."

"But, you have repented, father, and all the rest of your life you will pray that you may be forgiven."

"I know I ain't got long to live," the old man muttered; "he came to-night to tell me so."

"That is only your fancy, father."

"No, no, it ain't," he persisted; "I tell you, Delie, I saw him jest as plain as I see you now. I knew him the min'te I looked at him, although he don't look as old as he did when he was alive."

"Father, you must give up this money," the girl said, suddenly.

Yes, I s'pose so, but I don't know who it belongs to. I've had it on my mind for a long time that I ought to give it up, an' pay regular legal interest for the use on it for the time I've had it."

"This Mr. Dallis must have relatives," the girl said, thoughtfully; "I will write to this Mr. Maxwell Dallis, at Lynchburg, Virginia, to whom the letter was directed. I guess that he is a relation. He can tell us something about it."

"But, Delie, how kin you live without this wicked money?" he asked, sorrowfully.

"How did I live before?" she asked, smiling. "Oh, father, I would far rather live on bread and water, and know that I got it honestly, than live in this splendid house and know that it belongs by rights to some one else."

Emblen looked at the girl in amazement; her strong will was as a staff for his feeble hand.

That night the old man slept better than he had since the time he floated in the Nancy Jane down the Rappahannock.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A CHANGE OF FORTUNE.

ANOTHER week had come and gone, and during that week the good folks of Biddeford had fresh cause for wonder.

Delia Emblen had sold his big house on the hill and had taken the same little cottage where his wife and daughter had formerly lived when he had sailed the Nancy Jane up an' down the coast, laden with market truck.

And Delia Emblen had visited all the families for whom she had formerly sewed, and had said that she would be very glad to receive their work again.

And after this remarkable circumstance the village gossip shook their heads gravely, an' puzzled their brains as to the why and wherefore of this strange step on the part of Duddy Emblen's heirs.

A month before, the question had been, "How did Duddy Emblen make his money?" Now the query had changed, and "What has Duddy Emblen done with his fortune?" became the cry.

By many a shrewd and skillfully put question the more curious of the village folks strove to extract the truth from Delia, but the girl, with her Yankee cunning, was

fully a match for the questioners, and they gained but little information from her evasive answers.

One man alone of all the good people of Biddeford or Saco suspected the truth, and he kept his knowledge to himself. That man was Deacon Paxton.

It was the night before the Fourth of July. The day had been very warm, but the cool breeze, fresh from the ocean, came with the duskiness of the twilight and had tempered the heated air.

Down one of the little back streets of the town the clerk of the grocery store, Jerry Gardner, was proceeding slowly along. He halted in front of a modest two-story cottage, which sat back from the street, a little garden in front of it.

"I guess this is the house," he said, opening the gate which led into the garden. He had not taken three steps up the walk which led to the house, when the front door of the cottage opened suddenly and Delia Emblen came running out to meet her visitor.

"I'm so glad you've come!" she exclaimed, extending both hands to him, and holding up her lips to be kissed.

"Wal, I s'pose!" Jerry cried, in astonishment, but he did not omit to kiss the red lips so temptingly offered to him; "looks as if you was glad to see a feller!"

"Well, I am," replied the girl, promptly; "don't you like to have me show it?"

"Sartin'; but it seems kinder strange, you know. It's been a pretty long time since we were on kissing terms, Delie."

"Yes, I know it, but, now, please don't say any thing to make me feel mean. I've already told you how bad I've been, and you yourself shall see how good I mean to be in the future. But, why haven't you been to see me before?"

"Been up to Boston to buy goods; going to be a partner in the store first of September," he answered.

"Oh, won't that be nice!" she exclaimed, in glee. "You'll be able to keep a wife then, won't you?"

"Yes, when I get one," he said, a little doubtfully.

"Why, Jerry! what makes you talk like that?" she exclaimed, pouting just a little. "I'm sure that I intend to keep my promise and become your wife whenever you get ready to have me. Perhaps you never intended to get ready, though."

"I'll squeeze you like all possessed if you say that ag'in!" he exclaimed, passing his strong arm around her slender waist. "I'm all ready whenever you are. But, I say, Delie, what's the matter with your daddy? Folks say that he's all 'bust up."

"Well, father hasn't got much money," she said, slowly.

"What in thunder has he done with it?"

"Why, he never had much that really belonged to him," she explained.

"Oh, thunder! yes, I see now," he said, understanding the fact of the case at once. "He was acting as agent for somebody else."

"Yes, that's something like it," she said. "Of course father never said any thing about it. He preferred to keep his business to himself."

"Yes, I see, and all the folks here thought that all the money belonged to him. I s'pose the old man's given up his agency, and that's the reason why you're back to the old quarters, eh?"

"Yes."

"Wal, I guess you won't stop here very long, or else you'll have to make room for me somehow," 'cos I'm 'bout ready to get hitched, if you are."

"I ain't a horse!" she exclaimed.

"Wal, you know what I mean," he replied. "Will you go to the picnic to-morrow, down to the Pool?"

"Yes; will you take me?"

"Sartin! Is the old man in?"

"Yes."

"Better get him to come, too; it will do him good."

And so, snugly, side by side, his arm around her waist, the two proceeded to the house.

Hardly had the door closed behind them, when two men, passing along the street in opposite directions, encountered each other face to face right in front of the gate.

An exclamation of surprise came from the lips of one, and an expression of terror from the other.

The two men were Jed Hollis, the carpenter, and Daisy Brick, the adventurer.

"Keep off!" cried Brick, in alarm, thrusting his hand in the side-pocket of the loose sack-coat which he wore. "I've got a revolver here, and if you attempt an attack, I'll drill a hole right through you."

"You cowardly bound!" cried Hollis, in disgust. "I ought to choke you a little; you deserve to be choked."

"You just keep your distance, now, or I'll give you a chance to take a ride without having to pay for it, you big overgrown bully!"

"See here

"Yes."
"Well, you can't do it."
"What?" Hollis was astonished.
"I tell you you can't do it; she can't marry anybody."
"Why not?" the carpenter asked in wonder.

"Well, that's my secret."
"You're lying to me!"
"As I stand here a living man, I'm only speaking the truth!" Brick exclaimed.
Hollis looked at him for a few minutes in wonder; the intelligence had taken him utterly by surprise.

"I don't understand," the carpenter said, slowly.
"Of course not; you don't know the past life of this girl as well as I do."
"Then she can't marry Sin Paxton!"
"No; I tell you that she won't marry anybody."

"Well, that's some comfort," Hollis muttered.
"And now, the quicker you make up your mind to forget this girl, the better it will be for you."

"Oh, it's easy enough to say that."
"You might as well do it first as last."
"Ain't this a trick on your part to fool me?" Hollis asked suspiciously.

"What the deuce do I care about the matter?" Brick cried impatiently; "I'm not in love with her. It doesn't matter to me whom she marries, but I tell you, first and last, she won't marry anybody."

"Go on; I won't trouble you."
Hollis stepped aside, and Brick passed on. The carpenter seemed like one stunned; slowly he proceeded up the street.

The adventurer walked rapidly away, chuckling to himself at his escape.
"The madman would have strangled me some dark night," he muttered, as he hastened onward.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 140.)

Iron and Gold:

OR,
THE NIGHT-HAWKS OF ST. LOUIS.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.,
AUTHOR OF "FLAMING TAILSMAN," "BLACK CREST," "HOODWINKED," "HERCULES, THE MUNCHBACK," "PEARL OF PEARLS," "THE RED SCORPION," ETC.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FACE TO FACE.

"A hopeless darkness settles o'er my fate!"
—BAILLIE.
"My very soul seems moldering in my bosom!"
—BYRON.

The two young girls eyed each other in silence after their simultaneous exclamation.

Astonishment was pictured on the features of both.
Ildé Wyn was first to recover.

"Strange!" murmured the beautiful young ex-queen of the thieves, while she regarded Zella steadfastly with her large, lustrous orbs—and met there, in return, a gaze so much like her own, that it seemed but a perfect reflection of it.

Then she added, interrogatively:
"Who are you?"

"Who are you?" demanded Zella, beginning to resist the sensations of awe, the feeling of amazement which seized her upon the appearance of her counterpart.

"You shall know, presently," returned Ildé, in a meaning way.
"Tell me now," insisted Zella. "There is something very singular in this—"

"Granted," was the interruption. "But, for the present, we will not discuss it. I have come to say that you—"

"That I?"
"That you have awakened a great curiosity in me."

"A curiosity?"
"I have come quite a distance to see you—to have a few words with you. You remember me passing here to-day in a barouche?"

"Ah! the barouche!" thought Zella, as, for a second time, the occurrence at mid-day was recalled to her mind.

But we will deviate slightly just at this point, to say—

Hugh Winfield called at the house of Ildé Wyn at precisely the hour agreed upon, when he parted with his new betrothed, on the evening of his first visit to her.

Ildé summoned her barouche to the front door—an elegant turn-out, with mettlesome steeds, coal-black and glossy; harness richly mounted, and quivering, in places, with pivoted stars; a driver attired in flashy livery; a vehicle for pleasure, costlier furnished and luxuriously easy.

The young man had mastered himself marvelously since the night previous. And, as the couple were borne along, viewing the places of interest panoramically before them by the well-instructed driver, Hugh was even merry, under the influence of Ildé's bright smiles and melodious voice.

"See, Hugh—there is your father. He is bowing."

They passed Cyrus Winfield, who raised his hat. He was the same man on the street he had ever been—proud, haughty; a man who walks with a tread of confidence, and lives in conscious power.

He looked after them, and uttered:
"God bless that boy! He has proved himself a noble, noble son!"

As he was about to move on, an individual of short stature, wearing a slouch hat and a heavy beard, stepped up and tapped him familiarly on the arm.

"Well, sir—ah!"
"Yes, it's me. I want to tell you that I'm on the scent."

"Hat—on the scent, eh?"
"Exactly. Ever see this?" He displayed a twenty-dollar gold-piece, which had three round holes punched in it, on the imaginary line of a triangle; and, across the face of it, there was a rude cross, evidently cut in an idle moment, by a former owner.

"Hat—the devil! You have it! The very double eagle I described to you!"
"Exactly. See? I'm on the scent."

Found this at a provision store not an hour ago, have traced it up; think I've spotted the party—only suspicion, though."

Exchanging a few more words and knowing looks, the two separated.

The man with the bushy whiskers stood contemplating the coin which he held, and mused thus:

"I must be on the right trail. Got this from a provision dealer this morning—he said he'd had it since yesterday morning. He got it from one of the servants living at No. —"

Place, which is the house occupied by that pretty girl who just drove by. Now, this piece can't have passed through many hands—the theft was committed night before last. It's a tough thing to sus-

picion a person who owns livery, and 'swings' high; and it's twice as hard to prove it. We'll wait, though, and we'll see."

It was a detective, already on the track of those who had robbed Cyrus Winfield! But we must follow Ildé Wyn and her lover.

Suddenly, as they were passing through a certain street, on their way homeward, Ildé noticed a quick pallor overspread her companion's face.

She saw him glance upward; and more, following the direction of that glance, she saw the picture of woe and pleading at the third-story window of the boarding-house—the clasped hands, the tearful eyes, the parted lips.

It was all in a second of time; and then they were leaving the vicinity behind.

Hugh became markedly silent. His actions were full of uneasiness; his brow knit in the great effort of will he called up, to meet and conquer the pain this unexpected sight had caused him.

The beauty watched him closely—but in a way, from beneath the long, drooping lashes of jet, that he did not detect the study of her gaze.

In a few moments she said, as if nothing had transpired:
"I am sorry we came through this street."

"Sorry? Why?" with a start and a keen look.
"Oh, it is too full of business—we rode out for pleasure," she answered, carelessly; and then, to the man on the box:

"Out of this street as soon as possible, Jerome; I don't like it."

In obedience to her order, the barouche whirled around the nearest corner.

And she was exclaiming like this, within herself, still regarding Hugh covertly:
"Who can that girl be? What is Hugh Winfield to her? What meant that cry from the window?—I heard her call his name, I will declare! Ha!—an old flame! Perhaps a sweetheart that he is trying in vain to cast off? See him: it affects him deeply. He does not know that I saw—that I am watching him now. The occurrence has made me nervous. I fear. I must examine into it. I shall remember the house."

And what I suspect is true," and the soft hands clenched till the nails pierced the flesh—"I must bribe or force her to leave the city. Or, she shall be abducted forever from his sight. I will seek out Perry and Neol, despite our compact. They will serve me. She must be removed."

Hugh Winfield did not perceive the cautious glances of his beautiful companion; the clenching of the small fists, the compression of the red lips, and the outlines of some strong, inward determination which dwell in her face—all these escaped him, for he was absorbed by the effects of this unexpected vision of the girl he still loved, notwithstanding his efforts to uproot the passion and the allegiance due to Ildé; and memory of the wrong he had done her, was again working acutely on his tortured spirit.

It was in the early evening, when Hugh had gone, when she had assumed a plainer attire—that Ildé Wyn glided from her residence, and along the street, in the direction of Zella's boarding-house.

She entered a car which bore her very nearly the whole distance toward her destination.

And now, we find her in the presence of one who was, in her mind, a dangerous rival.

"Yes, the barouche," repeated Ildé, as though she read the other's thoughts. "You remember, do you not?"

"I remember it," replied Zella, calmly.
"Ah! you do. I am glad of it. Then you must even now, surmise the object of my visit?"

"You are mistaken—I do not. But if you have much to say, please be seated."

"I have much to say"—and Ildé seated herself, while Zella did the same—but I shall say it in a few words. I want you, to know that I saw the scene—"

"You saw the scene?"
"At the window."

"The window?"
"I saw you there, when we passed; I heard you cry out something—the words I did not hear; I saw you clasp your hands, and gaze after the gentleman in my company, as if he were dear to you—"

"As if he were dear to me!"
"That is it. Do you begin to comprehend?"

Zella was coloring with an involuntary blush—her face was twice beautiful in the kindling of emotion within her. Her eyes were like two bright stars in a ground of crimson.

"Well, if you saw all this?" she asked, forcing her voice to evenness.

"I saw it. You are dull. He is my affianced husband."

"No!" cried Zella, while a great pain gripped her fluttering heart.

Ildé elevated her brows.
"But it is true."

"No!—no!" Her lovely face was turning between pallor and blush; the brilliant orbs flashed incredulously upon the calm speaker.

"Hugh Winfield is to be my husband within a fortnight."

"Within a fortnight?" echoed Zella, breathlessly, as if she doubted her ears.

"Yes. So I am here to warn you—"

"To warn me!"
"That, for your own peace of mind, you had better leave this city as early as possible. It can do you no good to remain. He never can be yours—for he is mine. I plainly see that there has existed some old-time link of affection between you—you love him still!"

"Love him?"—Zella fairly screamed the words, as she stared wildly at her rival; "I worship him! You marry Hugh Winfield? You jest! This is a cruel dream!—impossible! He is mine! You do not love him as I do! I—"

But she stopped short; then her head bowed, with a hysterical sob; she buried her face in her hands, and moaned:

"Oh, Heaven pity me!"
This was too much. Her poor heart—already torn and bleeding in an agony worse than death—felt, now, as if a dagger had pierced it through and through.

Ildé contemplated the drooping form, half regretfully, half in triumph.

During the long pause which ensued, there was a knock at the door.

"Sure this is her room?" a voice was heard to inquire, on the outside.

"Yes, sir, I'm sure," answered a second party.

The door opened, and the undertaker, whom we have seen at the cottage home, entered their presence.

He came in a high state of excitement—yet striving to appear calm; while he ad-

vanced, with his hat in his hand, bowing, bending, smiling forcedly, looking from one to the other of the two young ladies.

CHAPTER XXV.

NOT THERE!

"Now you see it—now you don't!"
Big Dan scowled, and drew back his thick lips, till his broad mouth displayed a set of white, strong teeth, like the fangs of an angry animal.

Jiggers uttered an ear-splitting squeal as his bones began to ache from the thump caused by his captor's agile spring.

And the mulattress vented a half-choked scream, as she felt the hand at her throat.

"Shut up!" growled the giant, while he tightened his vise-like grip on each. "Shut that noise, or I'll knock you both together, till there ain't no more life into you than a mashed skater! Mind, now!"

"Oh, Lord! oh, Lord!" howled Jiggers, in combined pain and fright; "you're breaking my shoulder right in half, indeed you are! Let go! I won't run off, I vow! I'm a friend, indeed I am! I can tell you something very important. Won't you—ouch!—won't—oo-o!—won't you please let go! My shoulder! My shoulder!—it's mashed all up!"

Dan saw that he spoke earnestly. After hesitating a moment, he released him, sending him sprawling, by a powerful twist of his arm; and Jiggers scrambled to his feet in a bewildered way.

At the same time, the giant let go his hold on the throat of the mulatto girl, but he still retained a grip of iron on her arm.

"Keep her!" cried Jimmy.

"What was you a-doin' at that 'ere door?" interrupted Dan.

"I was listening. I heard every thing—"

"Ha!" taking a step toward him.
"Wait, now, you! I want to tell you something, indeed. It's something very important. It's about Calvert Mandor."

"Ah! Cal Mandor?"
"Yes; it's about him. I'm a friend of his—or I'm going to be. But, put that yellow girl into this room. Let's lock her up. She can tell on us, although she's a mutt—Dr. Onnorann cut her tongue out. Put her in the room."

Acting on Jiggers' suggestion, Dan dragged the girl into the prison apartment.

He saw that the other had something to speak about, and whatever it might be he was curious and impatient to hear it.

Pushing her across the room, while Jiggers remained at the door, he turned to the quadroon, who still sat in the chair against the wall.

"Beula, I'm a goin'!"

Then he noticed that the withered form was motionless and limp, that her head hung forward till the pointed chin rested on her bosom.

Filled with a sudden suspicion, he went up to her, and peered into the narrow, shriveled face, and the next moment he exclaimed:

"Dead, by thunder!"

"Dead!" came an echo from the doorway.

The life of the aged quadroon had gone out on the instant Dan Cassar leaped from his chair, to see who it was yawning at the slide in the door-panel.

"Don't stop," said Jimmy, uneasily; "we haven't any time to spare. Dr. Onnorann may drop on us at any minute. Come."

Dan addressed himself to the mulattress.

"If you make any kind o' fuss, now, an' harm anybody, so's to get out, I'll be back onto you, nig, and it'll be the worse for you ef I come. Mind? Jest keep your mouth shut, ef you know when you're well off, and with a meaning nod, he strode away.

The prisoner only replied with a frowning, angry, half-defiant look, and this followed the giant, till he disappeared beyond the door, which he secured after him.

"Now, bob-head, what've you got to say?"

"Sh; come down-stairs."

Reaching the office, Jiggers turned the key in the lock.

"If I tell you a secret, will you protect me against the Doctor?"

"Protect you?"

"He'd chew me up if he found out what I'm going to do."

"Jest go on, bob-head, and if you get into a fix on my 'count, I'll stan' by you."

Jiggers felt strengthened by this assurance, for he saw in Big Dan a formidable protector.

"I'm Jim Jiggers, the drunkard!—Jiggers, the sot!" he said, a little hoarsely, and laying one hand on the arm of his ally, while his eagle eyes started: "I'm known by that title by people who spit on me, and call me a dog and a fool, and who kick me when they have nothing handier. I do love liquor—I can't help it. But I'm no dog, nor am I the idiot they have named me. 'Sh! hark! isn't that some one coming? No—I only thought it. I've been so long under the thumb of Onnorann, the Doctor, that I'm a miserable, scaredy baby. Listen. I heard every thing that blind woman said—glancing about him, and speaking lowly: 'Do you know where Calvert Mandor is?'"

"No—where is he?" quickly, for the question reminded him of his being there.

"He's down a hole."

"A hole?"

"Sh! yes; in the back room, there"—pointing solemnly toward the door of the adjoining apartment. "But he's dead, I vow; for the fall is steep, and his head must be broken."

"Let's see 'bout that 'ere—"

"No—hold on," interrupted Jiggers, detaining the other; "it's no use; he's dead, certain. Besides, we haven't time. The Doctor will be here soon, and he might catch us—"

Dan did not pause, however, but advanced and turned the knob.

On the instant, there was a dull, whirling noise; he uttered a sharp cry, and staggered backward, almost falling.

He had received a shock from a powerful battery, which was contrived by Onnorann, to prevent James Jiggers prying into the contents of the room.

"Dr. Onnorann got hold of that will, and he forged a copy of it. In the forged instrument he inserted a clause providing, that, if, before a certain date, Mandor's heirs—do you understand?"

"Jest go on, bob-head; think I'm a fool?"

"That if none of Mandor's heirs came forward, before a certain date, then he, Dr. Onnorann, was to receive the full benefit of the will."

"O-ho! more news," thought the listener; and aloud: "Well, and what then?"

"I know where the forged will is."

"You do?"

"Yes—"

"Where at?"

"Sh! Jiggers advanced on tip-toe to the book shelf, his bow-legs at a double bend, and his eagle eyes rolling.

"Here!" he said, pointing to the books.

Cassar went up to the place indicated, and, at one pull, displaced several books, which crashed to the floor.

But the space beyond was bare.

"I don't see nothin', bob-head," grumbled the giant, as he looked into the cavity.

"Guess you've kinder made a mistake!"

"Where at?"

"Um! Ah! I—wonderful! Sisters, no doubt! I—"

"Then aloud: 'Really—pardon me; I wish to see Miss Kearn.'"

"My name, sir, Zella informed him."

"Ah! now we have it. Truly, Pardon me, Miss Kearn—I am sorry, I am regretful, I—a—my card." He handed her his card, which bore his name—Thomas Thornton—and an indication of his business.

"Well, Mr. Thornton?" she said, inquiringly.

"My dear Miss—pardon me; really, I—a—I am the bearer of bad news—ahem! very bad news. That is—"

"That is?" Zella repeated, wondering.

Ildé Wyn was staring at her rival in a singular way, from the moment her name was mentioned. At its first utterance by the undertaker she had started slightly; now she was occupied, part with listening to hear what the comer had to say, and part with scanning Zella's features in a peculiar earnestness.

"I hope, I trust, I desire, I—really, my dear Miss Kearn, I'm very awkward, you see; and—"

"And?" as he paused short.

"I've just come from your home."

"From my home?—you?"

"Yes. It's very unpleasant, you know, but it must be done; and I—a—that is—"

He seemed to stumble every time, as if it were impossible to frame the announcement.

This hesitating, uneasy, embarrassed behavior was quick to excite Zella's apprehensive suspicions—the more so after she had taken another glance at the card, and saw printed there the business calling of the man before her.

"Mr. Thornton, what have you to say?"

"I—pardon me; have you seen this evening's paper?"

"No."

"You have not—so. I'm on a very embarrassing mission, my dear Miss Kearn—"

"What has happened?" she demanded, quickly, though trying to be calm; for, now, a strange dread began to creep into her heart, an inexplicable sensation of fear seized her.

"I hope you will be calm—"

"I am calm—speak."

"Be reasonable. Speak, I say."

"I am reasonable. Your father died last night—some time near midnight, it is supposed."

And he exclaimed, inwardly: "There, by the rocks! it's out at last."

"Dead?—Dead? My father dead?" sitting, white as a sheet, and looking vacantly.

"Yes, my dear Miss Kearn," he said, mildly, and bowing so that he might not see the expression of terrible agony in her young face.

"Dead!"

One second, there reigned an unearthly stillness, an atmosphere of utter silence, yet full of whisperings. Then there was a single groan of woe, that sounded like the wail of a crushed soul, and Zella sunk backward.

Ildé was womanly. She felt deeply for the stricken girl. Instantly she and the undertaker were bathing the marble-like brow.

it so. I love him—I have worshipped him in vain, till now, I do not care to live! Why should I live?—I have nothing in the world to live for. I am a poor, hopeless, desperate girl—robbed of every thing I loved—alone and friendless. Take Hugh Winfield—take him; I yield him to you. But, oh! remember—remember when you are happiest in his love, that there may be a wretched, lifeless heart still yearning for him, a spirit that is withered forever. Take him—but, I beseech you, try and never let him come where I can see him! Take him—and I wish you joy!"

"Stay!—stop!—listen to me!" cried Ildé, stepping forward.

But Zella was gone.

She fled swiftly down the stairs—Thomas Thornton tripping and stumbling after her, till it would seem he must fall and dislocate a limb.

A few seconds after, there was a rumbling sound of wheels; and Zella, sitting alone, inside the vehicle, was being borne toward that home which was now creative of a threefold misery within her fated life.

When Ildé left the boarding-house, immediately after—while half its occupants were exciting themselves over a discussion of the scene—a marvelous change was noticeable in her.

Some deep, deep thought absorbed her; and, as she hurried along, she was murmuring, in an enigmatical way:

"How strange!—how strange this is! What can it mean? Her name is Kearn!—a name that has been before me ever since I learned to read. I must see her again. There is some mystery here—I must penetrate it. I must know more of her. Kearn?—Kearn? How very, very strange!"

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 143.)

The Rock Rider:

OR,
THE SPIRIT OF THE SIERRA.

A TALE OF THE THREE PAKES.

BY FREDERICK WHITTAKER.
AUTHOR OF "THE RED RAJA," "THE KNIGHT OF THE RUBIES," "DOUBT-DEATH," ETC., ETC.

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facing the chief, as if about to speak, when Cochise gave a violent start.

The sound of the magic horn could be plainly heard, echoing from rock to rock of the Sierra, and Cochise trembled.

"The spirits sound their horns to tell of my coming," said Belcour, solemnly. "If you think I am mortal, fire at my breast, and you will see."

He opened his coat as he spoke, and stepped back a pace, but Cochise was not to be convinced.

"White man liar. Me show him," he said, and drew forth a revolver from the numerous bundles at his girdle, aiming straight at Belcour's heart.

"Crack, crack, crack," pealed out four shots, and still the Frenchman stood erect, although his face paled somewhat, and he seemed to be in great pain, for every bullet struck fair.

When Cochise lowered his pistol, in great surprise, the conjuror deliberately cast back the four bullets, each one striking the Indian's bare breast sharply, and Belcour smiled.

At the same instant a hollow, demoniacal laugh echoed close to Cochise's ear, and as the Apache chief turned his head sharply to see whence it came, a voice growled:

"The grand of Cochise is being dug, for he has tried to harm my servant."

In uncontrolled agitation Cochise rose to his feet, and Red Lightning followed suit. The Cheyenne chief was more obstinate. He curled his lip and observed:

"White man's tricks. Me seen much better."

"Keche-ah-que-kono," said the deep voice of the Rock Rider, in the Cheyenne tongue, "dost thou remember the day, many summers ago, when thy hand took the life of a woman from the fort, when the soldiers were away? I know thee for the man that slew the mother and stole the child. Where is the child with the golden hair? Keche-ah-que-kono? Where hast thou hidden her?"

As the deep tones rolled through the circle, again the Cheyenne looked uneasy. He evidently recognized the other, for he answered, tremblingly:

"I can not tell, white chief. Keche was not there. It was a party of young braves hunting for scalps. I never saw the child."

"Liar!" thundered the Rock Rider. "Look on this face, and deny it if you dare!"

And he held up the round shield as he spoke, with the pale, ghastly face glaring down on the Cheyenne.

Something in that face seemed to awe and terrify the chief, for he rose to his feet, trembling, and stuttered in English:

"White lady very good to Keche. He never—she know—"

"She knows it indeed," said the deep voice again. "When Keche's child was sick to death, and his lodge was empty of food, who succored the chief and saved the child's life, but the white lady of the fort? When the captain of the soldiers went on the chase, who promised to guard the white lady from harm? Keche-ah-que-kono."

When the captain came back from the hunt, what met his eye? His lodge was in ashes, the child gone, and the white lady lay dead on the ground. And where was the Cheyenne who had grown rich on the bounty of the whites, and become a chief through the Great Father's presents? Gone, with the scalp of the white lady at his girdle, with the child of the man who had befriended his race, and who has now come to punish him. Keche-ah-que-kono, mount thy horse, for I have found thee at last, and thou and I must fight."

The rest of the Indians stood listening in wonder to the dialogue, carried on in their own language as it was; and all seemed to be surprised at the humble demeanor of the usually-boastful Keche.

When the Cheyenne chief bowed his head to the request of the Rock Rider, the other chiefs would have spoken out, but for their attention being claimed again by the same mysterious voices, crying:

"Let the men fight. The Manitou decrees it."

Then Belcour advanced, and in his turn addressed Keche.

"Chief of the Cheyennes," he said, "I can tell thee whether thou wilt be slain or no in this fight. The Manitou has spoken, and said that the winner in this fight is to have the white girls delivered to him, and this will tell us who will win."

He drew forth a pistol as he spoke, and pointed it at the white face on the shield of the Rock Rider.

"Behold," said he, "the divining pistol of the white magician. I fire a shot for my comrade."

He fired, and no change was visible in the face.

"Now one for the Cheyenne chief," said the conjuror, solemnly.

He fired; and a round patch of blood appeared on the white forehead.

"Take thy horse, chief," said the deep voice of the Rock Rider. "This thine own blood thou seest, to mark the forehead of her thou slayest."

Without another word he backed his gaunt mule into the crowd, which gave way before him, and Keche-ah-que-kono mounted his mustang.

Neither of the other chiefs offered the least opposition, for their superstition was thoroughly aroused by the magic tricks of Belcour, and moreover there is a natural liking in the hearts of all men to see a fair fight for their amusement. A huge ring was formed in an incredibly short space of time, about a hundred feet across, in the midst of which the Rock Rider sat statue-like on his mule, with his lance up. Keche-ah-que-kono, bristling with pistols as he was, and carrying a saber and rifle, yet looked decidedly downcast, as he mounted his horse and rode into the arena.

His conscience seemed to trouble him, for the past—a proof that his crime must have been more than ordinarily atrocious, for an Indian's conscience is very elastic.

All the while that this scene had been going forward, the two girls had been standing by, looking wonderingly on, and Carl Brinkerhoff had been smoking as placidly as if they were all perfect strangers.

Now, however, as the two champions rode out, Carl rose up, stretched himself with a yawn, and quietly approached his horse, which stood by. The German slowly swung himself into the saddle, as if to get a better view of the expected combat, and sidled up closer to the girls.

"Ket reaty, kirls," he dropped out from his lips in a careless tone. "Der time ist kommen."

A soft voice, that came from the air to all appearance, spoke to him at the same time in French, saying:

"Suis le cheval noir, mesdemoiselles. Soyez pretes a fuir."

And the girls knew it said:

"Follow the black horse. Be ready to fly."

Clara trembled and turned pale, but Blanche blushed scarlet. She caught the eyes of the strong, grave-looking German fixed on her own.

At that moment the black horse, obeying a whistle from his master, ceased to keep the circle guarded, and came trotting up to the young man.

And Keche-ah-que-kono entered the arena of combat.

CHAPTER XXI.
THE TRIAL BY BATTLE.

VERY soon the whole concourse of Indians was gathered into the great circle, in the midst of which the Rock Rider and his opponent were confronting each other. In one place alone the circle was thin, where the two girls, the German and the conjuror were near each other.

The Indians had retired from their vicinity in consequence of the fierce antics of the black horse, which assailed with tooth and hoof everybody who came too near.

And thus Belcour found himself standing near the two girls, sheltered by the body of the horse, and able to indulge in a little conversation, unseen by Cochise. The latter was indeed too busy looking at the opening contest to see much else.

Belcour's lips were apparently closed, but for all that the girls could hear a voice close to their heads, speaking:

"Young ladies," said "be ready to separate. One of you will be carried off by my friend, one by myself. We will try to gain the soldiers' camp, but we may have to go to the mountains. Be brave, and all will be well. If you are willing to fly with us, bow your heads."

Both girls looked bewildered, but for all that they bowed slightly, and Blanche murmured:

"Anywhere, away from these wretches!"

"It is well," said the mysterious voice.

"Be ready."

And then every one forgot them in the interest of the combat.

The Cheyenne chief, splendidly armed, and mounted on a fiery horse, seemed to have an easy victory in his hands, and yet he looked troubled.

The Rock Rider, on the opposite side of the circle, had not moved. He sat like the statue of a knight errant, with his shield in front and the point of his lance up.

Keche-ah-que-kono slowly walked his horse forward, and then halted. He drew his saber, and slung it to his wrist, pulled out a pair of revolvers, and then pointed his fiercest war-cries, and darted down at the gaunt mule, full speed.

As he started, the tall mule, before so gaunt and still, suddenly became a marvel of quickness.

Bounding forward like a goat, and then leaping from side to side so as to distract the aim of the Indian, the Rock Rider and his singular charger came to the battle.

Shot after shot flashed harmlessly, for the Cheyenne was firing from a galloping horse at a target that perpetually shifted, and his aim was hurried and too quick.

In five seconds one pistol was empty, and the other half-gone, and then the two combatants met.

The lance of the Rock Rider would have pinned the other but for the dexterity of the Cheyenne, who threw himself half off his animal to one side, and fired three more shots at a few feet distance. Every one struck the shield fairly, and not one pierced it.

Keche had no time to draw another pistol, as his mustang sprang out of danger with him. He only caught up his saber, and wheeled round on the Rock Rider.

It became a fair duel between saber and lance.

The Rock Rider maintained the same erect seat, the same severe gravity of appearance as ever, seeming to be quite indifferent to the issue of the contest. His mule was as active as a cat, wheeling round like a top, and bringing the Indian always on his left side, the strong one for the lance.

Keche-ah-que-kono whipped his mustang around, endeavoring to close with the other on the right, but wherever he went the sharp lance was presented to deter him.

At last, by a great effort, he reached the right side of the Rock Rider, and closed in with a fierce yell.

The Rock Rider laughed scornfully, and wheeled his mule to meet him. The well-trained animal reared up in the air, and his master at the same moment put down the point of his lance aloft. He had held it all this time couched under his right arm, pressed close to his body, but now he swung the point aloft, and brought it down with a sounding blow on the shoulder of the Cheyenne chief.

Keche tried to guard that blow, but the long, heavy lance-staff came with too much impetus to be denied. It beat down the saber, and the lance-head cut a deep gash in the chief's shoulder, casting him out of the saddle to the earth in a moment.

Down came mule and lance together, as the Rock Rider set the point against the breast of his fallen foe, and thundered out:

"Speak, Cheyenne, ere I slay thee! Plead for mercy for my child's sake! Where hast thou hidden her? Tell me, and I give thee thy life. Refuse, and thy heart's blood stains my lance."

The mule kept shifting its feet nervously, so that the lance-point quivered and shook around the Cheyenne, ready at a moment to be plunged in, at the first forward step.

Keche-ah-que-kono was half-stunned by the fall, and moreover seemed to be overcome with superstitious terror.

"I do not know, captain," he faltered out. "The Great Spirit knows the truth. The girl fled from us, and escaped to the mountains."

"Liar!" said the Rock Rider, sternly. "Tell me where she is, or—"

He picked him with the lance as he spoke, and the Indian, desperate at his position, grasped eagerly at one of his pistols.

In an instant the mule bounded forward, and the Cheyenne was pinned, writhing to the ground by the sharp lance.

"Another liar gone, curses upon him!" said the Rock Rider, savagely, his lip writhing fearfully and covered with foam. "Ye will not tell me where ye have hidden her? Then your blood on your own heads!"

He seemed to be moved out of his usual calm into the white heat of fury all at once, by the denial of the Indian, and looked the maniac all over from that instant.

Leaning down from the saddle, with amazing strength he picked up the body of the Cheyenne, threw it across his saddle-bow, and deliberately hacked off the head with his long knife.

Then the spell seemed to be broken which had held the surrounding crowd of Indians.

They had watched the combat in perfectly breathless silence, and had uttered a kind of groan as they saw their well-armed warrior go down before the lance of the stranger.

But the decapitation of the body seemed to rouse them. With one accord the whole circle sprang up, and rushed forward to take vengeance for the insult.

The Rock Rider seemed hardly to notice them, so perfect was his disdain, but as they came rushing in, firing and yelling, he suddenly dropped the body, spouting blood as it was, and catching the head by the scalp-lace waved it aloft in triumph, shouting:

"Death to Cheyenne, Apache and Comanche! The Rock Rider defies ye all!"

In another moment he had wheeled his mule, and went shooting through the crowd like a meteor, with the terrible lance far ahead of him.

Not an Indian had yet mounted. It seemed impossible that a single man could escape from two thousand Indians, even on foot, surrounding him closely.

But into the crowd he darted, his lance hinged under his right arm, with his bridle hand brought up close to support it.

Into a dense mass of yelling and shooting warriors he drove, with the keen lance-point always directed at their faces; and whenever he struck it was always in the face or forehead, the blade splitting the skull and glancing off, without being engaged.

The mule aided its master, biting and kicking furiously, and clearing a passage wherever it went, so that a broad lane was quickly opened, along which the Rock Rider sped toward the mountains.

And then, amidst the turmoil of yells and random shots, rose a cry of warning and rage from the rear, and the crowd swayed to and fro.

The Rock Rider shouted defiantly, waved his lance, and darted out of the crowd unharmed and unpursued.

As he looked back the Indians were running after their horses, and he could see two mounted figures fleeing toward the soldiers' camp!

CHAPTER XXII.
A RIDE FOR LIBERTY.

WHILE the wild duel went on, the girls had watched it with intense interest. Belcour and the German, while equally intent, remembered that their part was the next to be performed, and kept cool. Gradually and imperceptibly they edged out of the circle, the intelligent, trained stallion aiding them as if he understood their wishes.

When the Rock Rider unhorsed the Cheyenne chief, Belcour threw his voice close to the girls' ears with a great effort, and said:

"The time has come. Separate!"

The Indians were all hushed and eager, watching the duel, and their attention was completely distracted for a moment.

In that moment Carl Brinkerhoff gathered his horse with rein and spur, so that the animal pawed the ground nervously, ready to start, and sidled up close to little Clara Davis.

At a silent signal from his master, Belcour came up and stationed himself opposite to Blanche Davis, and Belcour walked up to him.

At that moment the Rock Rider lifted up the Cheyenne's body and began to hack the head off, and, with a universal yell, the Indians rushed at him.

Now Carl Brinkerhoff, eagerly, and he seized Blanche and the girl with superhuman strength in the excitement of the moment, and swung her up to Belcour's back.

Brinkerhoff stooped down from his saddle, and picked up little Clara as if she had been a doll, setting her on the saddle in front of him.

Then Belcour leaped up behind the girl, gave a great shout, and away went both horses at a thundering gallop from the crowd of Indians.

Little Yukop scudded off, stretched out straight in desperate hurry, and the whole party was a hundred feet away before the Indians had fully comprehended the trick played them.

Then, indeed, the racket was tremendous. A rattling volley saluted them, as every savage, whether in the crowd or outside, snatched his rifle and let fly at a venture.

The whole valley was full of scattered, outlying parties, and every man, after firing a single hasty shot, ran for his horse, and galloped to intercept them from the American camp.

Their very numbers were in the way of quick success, for several men being wounded by random shots of their own friends, the Indians became afraid to fire.

But, all the same, it soon became evident that the fugitives could not reach the camp without being intercepted, for Comanches and Apaches were tearing across their path by hundreds.

First Carl Brinkerhoff swerved off, and galloped down the valley to the only opening he saw, and then Belcour was compelled to turn.

As they turned, a tremendous volley burst from the soldiers' camp, and told with fearful effect on the dense crowd of Indians, who scattered like sheep in an instant, but only to dash at Belcour with vengeful yells.

The young man shouted to Belcour, and made for an opening in the sierra, the only chance he could see.

Even to get there he would have to run the gantlet of several stray Indians, who galloped to intercept him.

But the warm eastern blood of Belcour was up, and the pace at which he went was tremendous. It was as much as Belcour could do to maintain his seat, and keep his fair companion from falling.

They shot through the air so fast that breathing became difficult, and both could hardly see. There was a sort of whizzing vision of fierce, painted faces, and spiteful flashes through white smoke, and whistling bullets, and then Blanche Davis hid her face on her preserver's breast, clinging closely to him, as they scraped through a scattered group of Indians, every man of whom shrunk from the shock of the black racer.

Open green plains, studded with trees appeared before them, and through the clear space they skimmed, with the speed of birds, and still Belcour did not seem to labor, though carrying double weight.

The yells of their pursuers sounded fainter and fainter, for the thoroughbred stallion was running as he never ran at a race before, and the little ponies of the Indians seemed to be disheartened.

Before them rose the sierra, and a great broad ravine, ascending at an easy slope, spread before them at last.

Belcour spoke to his horse, and slackened his pace to a hand-gallop as he looked at the ravine.

"Now, mademoiselle, we shall soon be comparatively safe," he said to Blanche. "We can escape our pursuers in these mountains, but I fear you will have to undergo much hardship yet, before you can rejoin your friends."

Blanche looked shuddering back. The Indians were still following at some distance, but at a slow, easy lope. They seemed to have given up all hopes of being able to outrun the fugitives by speed.

Carl and Clara Davis were nowhere to be seen.

"Oh, sir!" said Blanche, earnestly, "I would suffer any hardships to be delivered from those terrible wretches; any thing rather than be captured!"

"You shall not be captured, mademoiselle," said Gustave, earnestly. "Sooner than give you up alive, I will blow out your brains with my own hands, if all other chances are gone. But things are not so hopeless. Two of my comrades have gone to Denver for help even now, and no doubt will bring back enough troops to rescue the train ere long. If we can manage to live in the mountains for a few days, we shall be saved. The Indians have nothing to eat, and cannot maintain such a crowd as they have by hunting more than a few days. Therefore, courage, my friend, and trust in Heaven."

He spoke much more cheerfully than he felt, for all alone as they were, with the whole valley full of enemies, and not a morsel to eat, save what he could find in the mountains, the prospect was gloomy at best.

But Blanche seemed to be comforted, for she smiled hopefully, and began to thank Belcour as they entered the ravine.

"But oh, sir," she added, "while we are safe, what has become of poor Clara and your friend? Do you think they have escaped? Was his horse a good one?"

"Very good, mademoiselle," he answered. "It was only a Government horse, it is true, but one of the best; a stout animal who could run well, and he must have distanced the Indian ponies ere this."

They were slowly climbing the ravine at a walk as he said this, and he turned round to look at the valley. It was full of scattered Indians galloping in three streams on the track of the three fugitives, and the heads of the two opposite streams were close to the sierra on the other side of the valley.

But the Rock Rider and Carl were nowhere to be seen.

The inference therefore was that they had escaped.

Belcour looked down at his own pursuers, and they were already within gunshot again, for they seemed to be determined to keep up the pursuit till fatigue should do what superior speed could not.

Several flashes were followed by the whizz of bullets close to them, and Belcour jumped off his horse.

The ravine turns a little above us, mademoiselle," he said. "Halt there, out of danger, and I will defend this pass."

As he spoke, he unsling his rifle from his back, and faced toward his pursuers.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 145.)

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DESERTED.

The sequel to a Flirtation.

BY LAUNCE POYNTEZ.

I gave him all my heart, he casts it down,
And grinds it in the dust when sure 'twas gone,
Poor bleeding heart that only beat for him!
And this, he says, was nothing but a whim.
The smile and soft low tone, the hands that met,
The meaning glance and whisper, that once set
The quivering nerves all thrilling with delight,
Because we loved—all, all forgotten quite!
Mere idle sport of fancy, when the time
Hung heavy on the hands that did this crime.

He promised, when he went, that on this day
All should be right at last, explained away.
It is explained, and what an explanation!
He loves another! 'Twas but a flirtation!
He lures me on, till fast the toils were set,
Only to leave me, with a soft regret
That I should think him earnest!—oh, my God!
Why can I not throw back this stinging rod,
And make him feel! Alas, alas for pride!
I dare not even confess it, but must hide,
And crush the last love from my heart, alone,
Leaving it dull and lifeless as a stone.
Before I dare to face the world. * * * *
Lie still, cold heart. I have loved once in vain,
But never henceforth can I love again.

A Woman's Folly.

BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

"NEVER saw a more admirable foil in all my life!"

"And our rival queens know it, too—trust women for that though."

"Rivals and yet friends. Something extraordinary, isn't it?"

"You are a perfect novice, my boy. Those two hate each other like poison. Either one could garrote the other with the greatest of pleasure, only that polite society would be apt to retaliate on such a forced method. I'll wager you one that the apparent nothings they are saying to each other are the keenest of polished shafts. The fair Hallen is a trifle ahead, I think. For once Miss Winneston's influence fails to counteract, and on my word I believe it's a reciprocal case between the lovely Rose and Bertram."

The two young men linked arms and sauntered away, and Bertram himself—sunk so far into the depths of a great chair near them as to remain unnoticed—wheeled about to take a critical view of the two lovely women at a little distance under the full glare of the gasolier.

"My queen Rose," he thought, his glance growing proudly tender. "I wish—I really do wish she was not so much with that Miss Winneston; she can't know her as I do. That woman is unscrupulous to the last degree, and Rose—it's odd, I can't understand it, she actually seems to exercise some power over Rose. I'll warn the darling soon as I have the right, and I'm just egotistical enough to think that I will have it."

He rose and sauntered over near the two. Rose Hallen gave him a smile over the book of engravings she was turning carefully, which brought a glitter into Miss Winneston's eyes, dropped instantly upon her bouquet, which she began to pull to pieces.

"Just in time to settle a vexed question, Mr. Bertram," she said to him. "We have been discussing flirtations—taking the bearings *pro* and *con*. Of course there are harmless flirtations which hurt nobody, but we spoke of the deeper game where somebody's trusting heart is sure to get unmercifully grazed. I maintain that a woman through a spirit of coquetry has no right to lead on any man who is thoroughly honest in his sentiments, or *cice versa*, as it may happen. I'm quite sure you will take my side of the question."

"Miss Winneston's precepts chime with her practice, and both do honor to the sentiment she has just expressed," he answered. "The justice of your conclusion is too evident to be disputed."

There was a little sting hidden under his words, for something like a half-dozen years before he had been lured on to a piece of folly which angered him yet to remember—and by her! Of all women in the world Miss Winneston was the last to truthfully disclaim the practice of coquetry, yet she sat complacent as though she had never pointed a shaft at an unsuspecting victim.

"I was telling Rose it is quite time she is turning a new leaf. The burdens she must have on her conscience are quite overwhelming."

"What a pity you can't share them, Laura. I quite appreciate the motive which would make you willing."

Bertram smiled in spite of himself. There was quite a difference between this time and a half-dozen years before, and Miss Winneston's efforts to win him back to his old allegiance had been a little too transparent.

"Ah, what harmonious sounds! dance music, is it? No, thank you, I never waltz. There comes Lingard in search of you, Laura. A promenade if you like instead, Mr. Bertram."

She floated away upon his arm somewhat to Miss Winneston's chagrin, who, knowing Rose's peculiar views, had counted upon securing Bertram to herself.

They made the circuit of the rooms and presently found themselves in a tiny boudoir, hung all in blue-and-white, and lighted only by the coldy-brilliant winter moonlight. There was a fresh fall of snow upon the ground without, and in the bay window, where they paused, it was light as day. A delightful nook, but Miss Hallen shivered and broke the silence of a second which had fallen.

"There is some uncanny influence astir, I think. This moonlight gives me a somebody-is-walking-over-my-grave sort of chill."

"Is it an unhappy augury? Do you know why I brought you here, Rose?—you must know what it is I have to say. I have the sweetest confession to make that ever fitted itself to words—I love you. The greatest boon to ask, to bless my life—your love in return. Dare I hope for it?"

He could hear his own heart beating while he awaited an answer. How still she was, how unearthly fair she looked, like an exquisite statue standing there! As cold and as motionless it seemed to him, burning as he was with impatient desire. Was it only the moonlight, which threw that wavering pallor over her face? The silence which lasted for probably a minute, but which seemed an hour, grew unendurable.

"Speak to me, Rose. What hope have I—what am I to be to you?"

"Nothing; I can not ask you to be even my friend."

"Rose?"

"Spare me, please." Her voice never

varied from its low, wearied calm. "Think of me kindly if you can. Please go, Mr. Bertram."

But he would not go, and he would plead his cause, hopeless as it seemed.

"You are like ice, Rose. You are not yourself. What has changed you so?"

His glowing, eager face, so darkly vivid, bent close to hers. He was all tropic warmth and impetuosity, she cold to frigidity.

"Ice and fire! They would never assimilate."

"Ice melts, sometimes."

"And fire is quenched. A flame with nothing to feed upon soon burns itself out, Mr. Bertram."

"Volcanic fires exist forever, and they are dangerous. It was so then—coquetry only, when I thought you were not indifferent."

"It was not." Her eyes sent a pale flash back to him. "Do you suppose?—can you think?—oh, heavens! why do you torture me?"

Her face was both appealing and defiant in the moment her emotion broke the still mask she had imposed. With the insight he had caught to her heart, he was quite as cruel as a man is apt to be—cruel in his strength over her weakness.

"You love me. I saw it in your eyes then—you can not deny it, Rose. Why should any thing keep you from me?—why, darling? Nothing shall, I say."

They seem tame words, but his pleading eyes and eloquent tones were powerful auxiliaries. Struggle as she would, she could not regain the calmness she had lost.

"Is there another answer for me now?"

He seemed almost confident of it, but she drew away.



DESERTED.

"There is no other. There can be no other; do not deceive yourself. Heaven pity me, I am not free to accept any man's love."

The blue and white draperies were pushed back, and Miss Winneston stood there, but Bertram, with his hot Southern blood aflame, would neither heed her nor be satisfied even yet.

"Not free, Rose! How can that be? You must—you shall tell me what barrier is between us."

"Tell him, Rose," came Miss Winneston's taunting voice. "Tell him that you were once sixteen, and committed a piece of folly, just as sixteen will do sometimes."

That she should have come upon this scene! Miss Hallen turned and froze to self-possessed dignity in presence of the rival star. She swept away without a reply, and Bertram gloomed down upon the intruder, and would have followed but that she stopped him.

"Her pride will never unbend to tell you," said she. "Shall I?"

He hesitated, but he was only mortal, and more than mere curiosity was at stake, so he waited for her to speak.

"She was married when she was sixteen. A romantic midnight marriage, which has been kept secret from that time to this. I am only being merciful in telling you."

He had put out his hand to steady himself, such a shock was this unexpected revelation.

"There can be no mistake about it," continued Miss Winneston, resolutely determined upon crushing any last ray of hope he might cling to. "I had the pleasure of assisting at the little ceremony."

"You!" he broke out with an abruptness which startled her. "Then there was mischief about it that you had a hand in. Was it a false ceremony? You had a penchant for such mysteries, it would seem. Was she your dupe or your victim?"

"You give me too great credit, Bertram. The little jest which you participated in, was not repeated, I assure you. She was married in good faith."

"To whom?"

Miss Winneston regarded him contemptuously. Any thing to prevent his seeking Rose again, she thought, and so answered, with all apparent candor:

"Frank Benson. You remember they were boy and girl lovers at the time you favored me with your earliest preference."

"Frank Benson?" She did not understand the flash irradiating his face, the glow softening it, or his quick, turning away. She stood alone in the moonlight, smiling to herself at this triumph over her enemy.

"In another moment they would have reached an explanation. Frozen pride and

burning indignation—they will not be apt to approach it again. She stole the heart of the one man I ever loved, and I have had my revenge complete after long years of waiting."

"You are free, Rose. Frank Benson is dead—dead months ago."

"I know that. But I am bound for all my life, because I shall never know even if I am really free."

"What do you mean? He is dead and you are free; that thought has been like a joyful pean ringing in my mind all night."

"It was not Frank Benson whom I married that night, six years ago. I thought it was at the time. We met at the church door; the only light was the moon struggling in through the windows; we were pronounced man and wife and parted at the altar. It was not until next day I learned that Frank Benson had sailed for Europe six hours before I met the man I supposed to be him. Laura Winneston had betrayed us both, and she alone can unravel the mystery; she alone knows who was my husband, and she would die rather than tell me. I learned afterward it was her love for Frank which prompted her to involve me in this terrible complication. It is best you should know the whole truth, and how futile any hope will be."

Rose was looking haggard in the morning light, and her tone was wearily pathetic, but these were slight evidences of the struggle she had passed through over night.

But over Bertram's face an almost incredulous light had been breaking while she spoke.

"Six years ago—six years ago at St. Giles, was it, Rose?"

"Yes," wonderingly.

"I was standing forward, and the old man came for me. I got a whiff of the perfume, and it took my breath away, almost, and I thought I'd go crazy."

"Cusick," said the captain, "you may come down into the cabin and clean it carefully. There is something very unpleasant down there, and I can not endure it."

"Boys, I've smelled a great many unpleasant things in my time, and some of 'em would have made a man forget his parents, but of all the unwholesome smells I ever struck that was the worst. I don't know what it was, and I don't want to know. Rugg was the only man on board the ship who did know, but it discounted polecats, grave-yards, and soap factories, easy. I wasn't very sorry to put out and get into the cabin to clean out, but when I got there it was all right, smelling as sweet as a parlor. Then the awful truth flashed upon me: Rugg had put the stuff, whatever it was, on the old man's clothes!"

"I fooled round the cabin a while, and pretty soon the captain came down. He looked awful mean and disgusted like, and I got out of that cabin lively, because I did n't want to get another sniff of that perfume. He stayed down there about half an hour, and then came up, looking a little scared, and called the mate to one side."

"I am afraid that there is malaria of some kind in this ship," he whispered; "it seems to get worse and worse."

"So it does, captain," said the mate, holding his nose. "I wish you'd stand to leeward, if you don't object."

"What do you mean, sir?" roared the old man, drawing his noble form up to its full height.

"I mean that, when a man smells in that way, it won't be very long before they plant him," replied the mate, who was getting desperate. "I never smelled such a thing in all my life."

"The boys made the most of it. When the old man stepped to windward of any one of them, you'd see that man grab his nose with both hands and hang onto it until he passed. Some of 'em went so far as to shun up to the tops and sit there, sooner than get a whiff of it, and there was Rugg, calm as a summer morning, looking as innocent as a lamb."

"Something must be done," said the captain, at last. "I can't bear this."

"Neither can I!" roared the first mate, waving the captain back. "Don't come near me, or I'll jump overboard!"

Excuse me, captain," said Rugg, coming forward. "But I think I can remedy this evil, if you will let me. I know what the trouble is, and no man in the world can help you except me. If you will come down into the cabin, I'll tell you what to do."

"They went down together, and by Rugg's order, some of the men brought up a water-cask and knocked out the head, and he made the old man strip and get into it. He was so scared that he obeyed orders, and sat in that cask for half an hour, while Rugg took his clothes, which he said were 'infected' and heaved them out of the cabin window. At the end of half an hour the captain pronounced himself better."

"You may get out and dress, then. Yes, I see by your eye that you are all right; and now let me give you some advice. This disease is among the crew, and the less you come on deck, and the more you keep out of the ship forward, the better for you."

"Miss Molly" did not move from the quarter-deck until we got to Honolulu, where he discharged us all, paying liberally to get the crew away, and shipped a non-descript gang of Kanakas and beach-combers at the island. We never knew what kind of stuff Rugg had put on the old man's clothes, but it did the business, and we were happy when the Sadie sailed, leaving us behind. We shipped when our money was gone, but Rugg had no occasion to serve out the new captain. He received—Eight bells! We've got to tumble out."

"Who comes that?" I heard the deep, gruff voice of Bill Grady demand, just as I was dropping asleep, thoroughly wearied both in mind and body, by the adventures and mishaps of the day.

We had had a hard fight with a large party of Apaches that afternoon, finally routing and scattering them in every direction, but not without what we thought a terrible loss on our side.

Old Rube had turned up missing. He had been seen during the latter part of the conflict closely engaged with a couple of the savages, but as all knew that he was

equal to twice that number, no one went to his assistance. Indeed, none could at that precise moment have done so, for there was scarcely a man who was not in about the same predicament himself, as the Indians outnumbered us three to one.

When we assembled after the pursuit, our old friend did not answer to his name.

Old Rube was not only the most experienced and skillful fighter and scout we had, but he was also universally liked.

I had learned to love the rough, quaint old trapper, and hence it was with a heavy heart that I laid my head on the saddle that night.

"Who comes that?" Grady had cried.

"Hold on, Bille, don't shoot," answered a well-known voice from the darkness beyond, and instantly every man in camp was on his feet, not even excepting the captain, Old John, and a wild hurrah arose, so long and loud, and hearty, that it shut up the coyotes, who were barking a mile off on the hills.

"Harrah, boyes! It ar' Rube, by ther ever-lastin' catamount!" shouted Bill Grady, running forward to meet his old comrade.

"What ther h—ar' you all a-rasin' sech a row fur, didn't ee ever see a man afore?" asked old Rube, as he came within line of the small fire-light. He was a sight to see. From head to foot his dingy buck-skin garments were covered with blood and dirt; his old coon-skin cap that he so highly valued, as a relic of Kentucky, gone, and his hunting-shirt torn or cut into "slithers," as one of the boys expressed it.

Altogether, the trapper looked as if he had seen rough usage, and a heap of it.

Finally the excitement quieted down, and seated around in a circle, we listened to Rube's account of the day.

"Ee knows, boyes," he began, "when I war sot afore by ther durned skunk es plugged my boss? Well, purty soon arter that, two of the imps tackled me, an' at it went wuss'n two tom-cats swung over a limb, w' ther' tails tied together."

"Them two Injuns fit like the devil, an' when I see you fellers all hed yur hands chuck full, an' no chance for to help a chap outen trouble, I kinder begin to think as how things war squally. Mostly I would n't mind takin' three or four, er mebbly half a dozen uv the varmints—but dang my cats of these hyar two was onto me wern't more'n enuff fur enny one man."

"Lordy, boyes! how I fit. I war bound not to go under, fur it don't look well, no-how; an' by an' by I got in a lick as downed one uv 'em, an' then the thing war all squal."

"The cuss ther war left got scart, when he see his pardner war an' he ups an' fetches a quare kind uv yell, an' then he'd try to run round and grum me by the leg, an' all sech apers, keepin' em up at sech a rate ther nether me nor ther Injun had time to do enny thing 'cept on'y to hold on like grim death onto a dead greaser."

"Arter keepin' this up till both uv us, me an' the red-skin, war nigh about played out, the cussed brute laid back his ears, an' took to level runnin', an' the way it kivered perairy war a caution, now I tell yur."

"Bout thier time the ballance uv the imps broke, an' the last thing I see war yur fellers a-chasin' uv 'em ev'ry which away."

"Fur more'n ten mile ther er durned hoss kept a-runnin', ev'ry now an' then tryin' to shake us both, so yur see all I could do war to hold onto the Injun, an' all he could do war to hold onto the critter's mane. Ther war the reason I didn't use my knife, fur yur see I war afraid to let go my hold fur to draw it."

"Purty soon I see we war nigha' the hills, an' then, I thinks, 'I'll be the time to dig the cuss in the short ribs, fur I w'd the brute couldn't run so fast up ground."

"But, es the feller sez, we war n't deslendered to reach the hills."

"All uv a sudden, an' when the mustang hed 'pearently put on more steam, over we went, all together uv a heap, ker-jum into the durndest, deepest kind uv a gully es the rain hed washed outen the perairy jess at the foot uv the range."

"I swar I thought I was bustid' wide open, fur somehow er other we must 'a' turned over es we went down, an' the whole lot, mustang, Injun an' all, lit right atop my stummauck."

"The hoss war dead, broke his cussed neck, I reckon, but the Injun war all right, an' I see him scramblin' up an' drawin' his sticker."

"I felt mout'ly like takin' a nap, jess then, but thar war n't no time, so I riz an' at it we went ag'in."

"The gully war deep an' narrow, an' ther war some water at the bottom. So yur see thar war n't much elbow-room fur fancy footin'."

"But I reckon the way I put ther red nigger through war about right, an' the whole thing would 'a' ended well enuff if it hedn't 'a' been fur the cussed mud."

"Jess look'ee, boyes, I've purty nigh ruined my best riggin', an' I'm mighty afraid they'll hev to kim off—a thing as hain't happened fur near four year now—an' go to the wash!"

A wild yell of laughter greeted this assertion of the old trapper, but he gravely continued:

"Thar's nuthin' to lart at, es I kin see. But 'bout ther Injun. I knifed him at last, an' then crept onto the gully, purty durned high beat out, I tell yur. You fellers all thort Old Rube war gone under, didn't yur?"

"We did that," answered the boys.

"Well, I reckon yur see I hain't, an' not countin' the holes ther red-skin ar' made in my karkidge, I'm all right, 'ceptin' my riggin', which ar' summat riled."

In a few days Old Rube's wounds were healed, but his buck-skin didn't come off, and consequently did not go to the wash, or rather the creek.

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